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THE
CASTLE OF ERIDAN:

OR,

The entertaining and surprising History

OF THE

VALIANT DON ALVARES,

AND THE BEAUTIFUL

EUGENIA, DUCHESS OF SAVOY.

BY G. A. GRAGLIA.

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179,	10, for HER r. HIS.

INTRODUCTION.

At a time when the Public is entertained with so great a variety of productions of this kind, should I so far be successful as to escape the imputation of presumption for the introduction of the **CASTLE OF ERIDAN**, my warmest expectations will be gratified.

—I conceived, that if my undertaking was supported by some historical facts the structure would be erected with greater facility, while the addition of collateral circumstances and events, though not authentic, would tend to diffuse an air of probability—for Va-

lentinus Barruchius, a Spaniard, the perusal of whose writings first suggested the plan of this tragical history, has left to posterity but a few pages relative to this subject, in his Latin Chronicles—by closely observing the effects naturally resulting from the given causes ; and with this view, I have paid particular attention to combining with precision the times, the characters of the different persons brought into action, with the dispositions of their mind, contrasting them with events which, from the nature of things, would inevitably call forth all the powers of imagination to paint their

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their various effects ; this method it is presumed, cannot fail of keeping the Reader in a state of constant anxiety to know the issue.—Every writer, ought to have two grand objects in view, viz. to entertain and instruct; in addition to these, the Reader will observe that virtue and vice have met, in due time, their punishment and reward.

It would be unnecessary to attempt ascertaining from the discordant authors who have written upon the subject, the epoch when the historical transactions I have treated upon took place. Some record them in the reign of

Charles

Charles VII. of France, called the Victorious, who governed that kingdom when the English made themselves masters of it by force of arms, alleging as a proof, That the Tolledans, enemies of Don Alvares, sent agents to Marseilles to purchase arms.—Others, that they transpired under the Pontificate of Paol II. asserting, that when Donna Vincenzia wrote from Rome to her brother Don Alvares, she made mention of this Pope, which circumstance, however, does not appear to be well established.—Others again, and with more appearance of truth, inform us of their having taken place

place in the time of Sigismond, who was sole monarch of the empire of Germany from the year 1400 to 1437, during which period the schisms of John XXII. Gregory XII. and Benedict XIII. disturbed the peace of the church, therefore, in consequence of the silence observed by Donna Vincenzia relative to the name of the Pope at the time she visited Rome, we are induced to believe her letter inserted in this History to be genuine ; but be this as it may, it is beyond dispute that this Emperor carried arms against the King of France ; the Duke of Savoy, as Generalissimo of that King,

having

having received orders to march his troops against Sigismond ; and prior to the Duke's quitting Turin his capital, he nominated Count Pancalieri his Lieutenant, who is a leading character in this entertaining History ;—but from this diversity of opinion, I must leave my readers to form their own judgment from the documents adduced ; and to such as contend for the importance of precision in time for ascertaining the truth, and clearing up doubts in historical matters, I can only recommend a further research, as confessing myself unable to be more particular as to time than I have been.

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AMONG all the passions by which human nature is generally assailed, love has always been considered as one of the most predominant; for, as soon as it has taken possession of a generous heart, it works in it as the corrupt humour of those infected by a fever, which from the heat diffuses itself through all the other sensible

B parts

parts of the human frame ; for the corroboration of this truth, the following wonderful and authentic history will furnish us an incontrovertible proof.

Those who have read the ancient annals and chronicles of Spain, may have observed in them the causes of the inveterate animosity, which subsisted for more than forty years between the families of Alvares and Tolledos ; which were not only the most distinguished for their nobility and antiquity, but also the most powerful, by their extension of domains and

and number of vassals, in all the kingdom. It happened that their armies being one day engaged in a very close battle, Don Alvares, who was at the head of his troops, a man, as history informs us, of great renown for his warlike achievements, had a sister, a widow, called Vincenzia, a lady endowed with great prudence, and much addicted to devotion; who, after having heard the dismal news of a pending battle, threw herself on her knees, beseeching the Almighty with fervent prayers, to put an end to this intestine and destructive war, and reconcile

the two families. And when she heard many on both sides had already fallen in the heat of the action, she made a vow to God, if the victory should declare in favour of her brother, she would go to visit the holy sanctuaries at Rome on foot as a pilgrim. After much bloodshed Don Alvares remained master of the field. Donna Vincenzia being apprized of it, acquainted her brother with the vow she had made, and it appeared to him very strange, that she could engage herself so seriously to perform such a journey; therefore, he endeavoured to dissuade her from it; she, how-

however, with entreaties and remonstrances, had sufficient address to obtain his consent ; he expected, nevertheless, she would perform it with due convenience and leisure ; and above all, not hurry her journey to the prejudice of her health ; and further that she should be attended by a company suitable to her rank.

Donna Vincenzia having left Spain, and crossed the Pirenees, passed through France, and after having surmounted the Alps, arrived at Turin, where the Duke of Savoy kept his court in great splendor and magnificence ;

fidence ; the Duchefs, his consort, who was sister to the King of England, and of such transcendant beauty, as to be deemed the most handsome woman in all the West ; and the fame of whom raised the curiosity of Donna Vincenzia, who was already anxious to see her *en passant*, to be certain if in reality her great beauty was equal to the report spread abroad ; and fortune was so favourable to her wishes, that at her approaching the town, she met the Duchefs riding in her carriage, taking the air along the public walks, with which the town and the castle are most delightfully fur-

furrounded. Donna Vincenzia, attracted by the magnificence of the carriage, advanced towards it, and as good fortune would have it, the glasses were down ; then she, struck with admiration, in seeing her surprising beauty, thinking her the most handsome woman she had ever seen, said rather aloud to her company in the Spanish language : “ If fortune had so decreed, that my brother and this princess, had been destined for each other, one could without hesitation have said, they were the most accomplished, and lovely couple that ever existed ;” and it was in reality so,

for

for Don Alvares was without exception the most handsome and admired nobleman in all Spain. The Duchess, who, among other languages, understood the Spanish perfectly well, in going on took notice of this foreign company, and dissembling her having understood what the pilgrim lady said, she conjectured within herself, by the comparison she had made, that she was some Spanish lady of very high birth ; upon this, when she had proceeded a little farther, she charged one of her pages to observe carefully the hotel where this lady should take her abode, and tell her,

she

she should be very glad if she would call on her, at her return to the castle ; which order was punctually executed by the page. While the Duchess was walking up and down the inviting banks of the river Pó, all her thoughts were turned upon what she had heard from the Spanish lady, which preffed so much upon her mind, that all on a sudden she left the delightful spot, and took the road to the castle. At her arrival, she found the Spanish lady waiting for her, according to the message she had received ; and after having paid the respects due to so great a princess, and having been in-

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roduced in a most condescending manner into her apartment, the Duchess began by asking her of what province of Spain she was of, what family, and what motive could have induced her to undertake such a long and fatiguing journey; finally, what she had seen most remarkable in it.

Donna Vincenzia, after having complied with the Duchess's desires, concerning her different questions, gave her a most curious and surprising description of that part of the Alps, called Montcenis, to which she led by an unskilful guide, which she

took in Provence, where she found herself so high, that the purest clouds which are seen in the finest summer days suspended and apparently fixed in the air, were much beneath her feet ; then, having descended for the space of an hour, it presented to her eyes the most astonishing spot that nature could form, which was a kind of alcove or amphitheatre, in the form of a semicircle, open towards the north, surrounded by extremely high and steep mountains, about a hundred feet in breadth, and a hundred and fifty deep ; at the bottom of it against the rock, she saw a young shepherd

with

with about a dozen sheep, shut up in a pen, who was playing upon his pipe a lively and pleasing tune, the reverberation of which produced such a variety of echoes, that the charming effects of it were impossible to be described. Afterwards she passed to that part which astonished her the most, where two fountains were gushing out of the rocks on both sides opposite each other, about a hundred feet high, forming an arch in the air near a yard distant from the main rocks ; and underneath, two separate basons of a most clear water, from which two rivulets confined by rich green.

green carpets on each side, embroidered with beautiful small flowers and aromatic herbs, were formed ; which, after falling from one cleft to another, and meandering through the vallies, one by turning to the west, gives birth to the river Durance, which enriches the luxuriant plains of Provence ; the other, by turning to the east, and forcing its way through rocks and precipices, gives origin to the famous river Pô.

The Duchess was much gratified at this curious and surprising picture ; but, on hearing of the great nobility of

Donna

Donna Vincenzia, she made an apology for not having, perhaps, paid more attention, and not having received her according to the merits of her rank, alledging in her defence the total ignorance of her person: and, after a few other customary compliments, the Duchess wished to know what was the meaning of the words she said concerning herself, and likewise concerning the merits of Don Alvares. Donna Vincenzia somewhat confused, replied: Madam, if I had known before you possess our language so well as I now do, I should have been more cautious in extolling

tolling, as I did, the personal merits of my brother, the praise of whom would have had a far better effect from the mouth of another ; nevertheless I am proud to say, with all those that know him (without being blinded by brotherly affection) that he is one of the most handsome and engaging noblemen that Spain can boast to have possessed for these twenty years past ; but in regard to what I have said concerning your beauty, if I have committed any offence, madam, it will never be pardoned me, for I shall never repent of it, neither say otherwise without speaking against the truth,

truth, which truth I would undertake to verify by yourself, if it were in the power of nature, that it could, for a quarter of an hour only, transfer into another the great gifts with which it has so eminently adorned you. To whom the Duchess, conscious of what she owed to herself, answered, not without some shade of blush, which expanded new graces upon her face : Madam, if you go on with this language, you will induce me to think, in changing place you have also changed your good sense ; for, in point of beauty, I am considered the least in this country ; or else I should be

be reasonably persuaded, that the perfections and merits of your brother are so impressed in your mind, that every one you see, having some appearance of them, you compare them to his own. Instantly Donna Vincenzia, thinking the Duchefs had taken ill the comparison she had made between her and Don Alvares, being a little vexed, said : Madam, pardon me if I have forgot myself so far as to dare to put the beauty of my brother upon a level with yours ; if he had no other merit worthy of admiration, I should be ashamed, being his sister, to have praised him in a place

place where he was unknown ; but I am fully persuaded, were it possible, even his enemies, besides vindicating my assertion in your presence, would assure you that he is one of the most gallant and accomplished noblemen living. The Duchess observing her to praise her brother with so warm an affection, was much gratified ; and it would have been very pleasing to her to have been farther indulged in speaking of him, if the fear of displeasing her had not suspended ulterior replies. The Duchess interrupting then the conversation, gave orders to prepare the table for supper ; which,

to

to shew the great regard she had for Donna Vincenzia, was served with a great variety of delicate and choice dishes. When the supper was over, and a short desultory talking had drawn near the hour of rest, the Duchefs, to give still farther proofs of her attention, would have her to partake of her own bed.

While the ladies are retired to rest, I shall take the opportunity to offer to the reader a description of the Castle of Eridan, rendered famous by the events which took place in it according to history; and, in order to avoid

avoid being suspected of partiality, I shall give here a faithful translation of it, which Donna Vincenzia sent to her brother while she was at Rome; and it is as follows.

“ Dear Brother,

“ It is at last in my power to compensate in some measure for the four months’ absence from you, with the happiness of finding myself in the capital of the christian world. The next day after my arrival, being the feast of the prince of the apostles,

I went

I went to St. Peter's, where the holy Pontiff officiated. The sight of the temple, and the awful ceremonies of the divine service were so majestic, that it will never be in the power of any one to give a proper idea without seeing it; then I went to receive the holy sacraments, according to my vow, in the first christian church built in this city by Constantine the Great, called St. John Lateran. I assure you that the tears of consolation so abundantly dropped from my eyes, in finding myself in so awful and so holy basilic, that I firmly believe to be true, what we read of the com-
punction

punction and happiness of mind in the pilgrims that visit the sanctuaries of our redemption in the Holy Land. I was then successively invited by several Roman Princes, who have received and entertained me with great distinction, and in particular by our Ambassador, who for several days took me into his carriage to shew me the great magnificence of this so renowned city, and above all, the principal villas of the first nobility. It is not my intention to expatiate upon the inexpressible beauty of them, neither of those wonderful gardens I saw in other parts of Italy, for it would

would be an attempt above my capacity to pourtray their astonishing variety; I shall therefore endeavour to do my best, to give you a tolerable description of the castle in question, with its adjacent views, belonging to his Highness the Duke of Savoy; which being at the gate of this new land of promise, you may more easily guess what it must be in the inside, therefore don't expect from me any poetical colouring, for the object is by itself so enchanting, that a simple and plain narrative is sufficient to excite the admiration of every beholder.

“ In

“ In coming out from the city of Turin by the new gate, which is exposed to the south, after having passed over three iron bridges, which are drawn up at the close of the day, you have before you a kind of esplanade, carefully kept in the form of an open fan, about half a mile in length, from the east to the west, and a quarter of a mile broad ; in the middle of it runs from the west to the east a rivulet of clear and rapid water, about three feet deep, in a straight channel, about five feet broad, lined with bricks on both sides ; in the middle of it there is an arch under ground, about

about twelve feet in breadth, for the convenience of carriages; on each side of it there are three bridges, each formed of a single flat stone, three feet broad, at the distance of about thirty feet from each other, all even with the ground. At the edge of the fan, in the middle, there is a very spacious and straight road, of about twenty miles in length; so that the gate of the town, the above mentioned arch, and this road are all upon a line. This road is all along planted on both sides with oaks, very high and large in proportion, adorned on each side with a foot walk of elms, about

C half

half a mile long, and their branches so carefully interwoven and clipped, as to form all along a green arch, to shelter passengers from the sun and rain. On both sides of this middle road, at an equal distance of two hundred and fifty feet, there is a diagonal straight road, beautified with trees, in the same manner: that on your right is about five miles long, which leads you to Stupinigi, a country seat of the Duke, where he goes to hunt the stag; the other on your left is about a mile long, which leads to the Castle of Eridan. When I called on the Duchess according to a

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message I received from her, I went by the foot walk on the left of the middle road. When at the end of it, I had on my left the way which leads to the Castle, about a mile long, also with a like foot walk on both sides of equal length. Before entering into it I had a fancy to walk a few steps on my right, and posted myself on the middle of the long road, to enjoy the different vistas of it. At the distance of about a hundred yards towards the west, there is a very elegant prospect of a church dedicated to our Lady, with a beautiful garden before it, with a very great marble gate of

the Dorick Order ; towards the south, is the great road, of which my eyes could not reach the end ; towards the north, I had the beginning of this great road and the sight of the spires and towers of the city at the end of it. Then, after having indulged myself with these pleasing and luxuriant views, I entered on the foot walk on the left, towards the east, which leads to the Castle. While I was walking on under these shades, I saw at a great distance the Duchess coming up from it. The fear to swell this letter to a story, deters me from giving you a full account of the pomp and magnificence

nificence with which this Duchefs appears in public; suffice it to say, that they rival those of our Queen in richness and splendor, and surpass them in elegance and taste. But before I continue the description of this delightful place, I cannot pass over the pleasing sight of a horse, which she will always have behind her coach whenever she goes out. This young animal, so remarkably fine for his symmetry and proportion, she brought with her from England; its sleek and black skin is in every respect like black velvet, with only a white spot on its forehead in the

form

form of a rose, with a fine long flowing mane and tail, bounding and champing the bit in going along, with a white velvet housing on his back, most richly embroidered with gold, hanging almost to the ground on both fides. So proud was he to see himself so richly caparisoned, that it was the most entertaining thing to observe how he tossed his head, to hear the jingling of the small golden chains and tassels, with which he was most tastefully adorned, and conducted by a groom on each side, with the reins of gold lace in their hands. It was on this occasion I
saw

saw for the first time the Duchefs.
Now I shall resume my description :
When I was at the end of this foot
walk, I entered into the Castle by
a great gate facing the road ; before
it there is a yard about a quarter of
a mile in circumference, with two
rows of marble columns round it,
forming a spacious colonnade ; over it
all around there is a terrace of six
feet in breadth. When I was in the
middle of it, I observed on my
right an iron gate as high as the
colonnade, which presents to the eyes
a princely garden ; and on my left
another opposite to it, which admits

you

you into a botanic garden most costly and curious for the great variety of plants it contains: then having ascended the very broad and commodious stairs of this most magnificent and stately building, and of a surprising dimension, I was introduced into a grand saloon, where, among the various and excellent pictures, I observed over the mantle-piece a capital workmanship of painting, representing a chariot with horses falling down on their backs from the clouds, and under it the following inscription: *The fall of Eridan, son of Apollo, into the river Pô, from which*

which this Castle took its name. Then I was shewn into the grand apartment. I shall not attempt to give you a full description of all the engaging objects I observed in it, confining myself to give you only an account of three most remarkable rooms: The first, besides the genealogical tree of this most ancient family, allied by marriages with all the Sovereigns of Europe, contains all the Princes issued from the valiant Beroldus, son of Otton, Elector of Saxony; who, having quitted his father's house, came into this country, and conquered the Duchy

of Savoy : the trunk and the branches of this tree are made with silver, and the portraits are painted in miniature, drawn from nature, and all set in gold. All around the room are seen their great military exploits painted by the most eminent painters. In the second room, there is in the middle of it the judgment of Solomon, sitting upon his throne, with the two contending mothers, and a soldier holding the infant by one leg with his left hand, and with the right lifting up a cutlass, in the act of dividing the child asunder ; all in ivory, but so exquisitely executed, that the

whole

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whole appears to consist of a single piece of ivory. But what increased my surprise was, that the room being adorned all round with plated glasses, the reflection of them, multiplied such a number of these statues, that I found myself quite embarrassed how to move. What I have observed worthy of your notice in the third, was a round table of porphyry, four feet in diameter, supported by a single leg, in the form of a pyramid, in one piece ; but I was struck with wonder, on observing that the top of the pyramid which supported the table underneath in the middle, had scarcely

scarcely two inches in circumference, and the square basis six feet. Afterwards I was conducted to a very high and spacious balcony in front ; thence I had under my eyes the colonnade of the yard, and the two gardens which surround the Castle on both sides, and before me all the beautiful and various walks already described, with the full view of the capital on my right, and at a very great distance a chain of the western mountains ; and, being almost the setting of the sun, and a charming day, the sight of it was magnificent above all imagination. Then I passed on the balcony

to

to the east—My dear Brother, I have no words to express my surprise at so unexpected a scene of natural beauty : imagine to yourself that you have underneath the famous river Pô rolling rapidly its clear waters from the south to the north, for the length of more than three miles in a straight line, and on the opposite side a chain of the most luxuriant hills all along its bank, almost covered with elegant country seats, most curiously beautified with towers and belvideres of noblemen's families, and the spires of the churches rising above the highest pines and poplars ; and the whole hill

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enriched with all sorts of fruit trees and vines. At the foot of it, along the river is a very spacious straight road, three miles in length with a row of elms on each side, under which a great quantity of genteel people come from the city, over a stone bridge a mile below the castle, in their coaches, to enjoy the air. I shall close this long letter with a description of the most enchanting spot I ever saw, I mean the flower-garden, which in crossing the yard I saw on my right: this garden is of a square form on the outside, surrounded with an high and strong wall, about a mile in cir-

cum-

cumference ; on the inside round it, there is a plantation of oaks forming a perfect circle, so lofty and so large, that one would think they had been spared from the flood ; their thick branches are so closely and nicely entwined, and so clipped from the bottom to the top, that when you are in it in the day time, you fancy yourself to be in a round, spacious, green tower, which receives the light only from the sky ; in the middle of it there is a square basin, of about a hundred and fifty feet in circumference, a statue of Venus of white marble stands in the centre, and on her left a swan that

spouts

spouts water more than thirty feet high, which falls in a perpendicular manner before Venus. On the four corners of it, are four statues of marble of different colours, representing a satyr, Pan, Bacchus, and Priapus, highly and curiously finished. From the bason to the trees, there is all round a delightful green carpet, and in the middle of it runs a walk, most carefully kept, about six feet in breadth; and on each side of it, all round the garden, are a great number of pots of flowers, all made of cast brass, in the various forms of Tuscan urns, and upon them are represented

sented the most engaging metamorphoses of Ovid. The great variety, beauty and fragrance of the rich flowers they contain, form altogether such a fascinating object of delight, that my pen is quite inadequate to give you a tolerable idea of it. Round the garden, between every other oak, at a proportionate distance, are twelve statues, made of a compound, which afterwards becomes as solid as marble itself, representing after nature, by the different colours of the drapery and allusive emblems, the twelve months of the year, in such a fanciful and delicate

man-

manner, that you are at a loss to which of them to give the preference. I shall, however, attempt to give you the description of October: It is represented by a beautiful little boy quite naked, tendering a bunch of red grapes to his mother; it is very pleasing to observe how he stretches his right leg and arm to reach her hand; the mother with a bunch of white grapes in her right hand, tantalizing with it the little boy, who seems longing after it. She is of a natural size, with her hair and eye-brows of a chefnut colour, and a branch of vine leaves round her waist, negligently placed, sweetly

sweetly smiling at the boy with her rosy mouth. In the spaces between the trees, there is a rising ground in the form of a bow, covered all over with a very soft and thick grass to sit upon. I was walking in this garden with the Duchess about the setting of the sun; I protest to you, that the stars, glittering like the purest gold, which the transverse rays of the sun formed in a sparkling manner all over the trees on the east side, the murmuring of the falling fountain, the melodious warbling of the various birds, and the fragrance of so many beautiful coloured flowers, threw me into

into so charming an absence of mind, that I had entirely forgotten the Duchess was in the garden with me. Now I shall take leave, assuring you that all I have said is but a feeble shade of what I have seen myself; for, though, in the surrounding places previously delineated, nature appears to triumph on all sides over art, yet this garden by the prodigies of art it displays, seems to dispute the victory over it."

After this long digression we shall return to the ladies we left reposing; where the noble pilgrim, fatigued

fatigued with her journey, had a very comfortable night; but the captivated Duchefs, revolving in her mind what she had heard from Donna Vincenzia, had, on the contrary, a very restless one; for the extraordinary merits and other perfections of Don Alvares were so deeply engraven on her heart, that in trying to shut her eyes, she fancied something like a phantom was continually hovering before her, and being anxious to know what it could be, she wished to have it nearer; then all on a sudden, shame and fear mixed with the modesty she had so long preserved, and the con-

jugal

jugal faith she had always so scrupulously observed towards the Duke, her husband, occurring to her mind, her first thoughts no sooner manifested themselves, than they were instantly suppressed. She therefore passed the greatest part of the night troubled by a long contrast of opposite wishes; at last, the light of the day appearing with its usual brightness, invited her to rise. Donna Vincenzia having then prepared every thing ready for her departure, went to take her leave of the Ducheſs, who by the rapid progress of the flames, which the discourses of the preceding day had kindled

kindled in her heart, wished rather to have been deprived of her visit; nevertheless, dissembling the anguish of her passion, at the approach of this separation, which she could not prevent, she exacted from Donna Vincenzia a promise to pass by Turin, on her return from Rome, and after a most generous offer of all that lay in her power, she retired in wishing her a happy accomplishment of her vow.

The Duchess, a few days after the departure of Donna Vincenzia, in endeavouring to suppress this newly kindled

kindled fire, gave to it a greater force; and in proportion as her hopes were discouraged, her desire redoubled its impetuosity. But, after a long and obstinate conflict between duty and passion in her mind, the victory remained on the side of love, and she formed the resolution, happen what would, to entrust the secret with one of the ladies of her attendance, her confidant, called Euphemia, to be assisted by her advice, being the only person, whom for sagacity and fidelity, she could trust with all her secrets; and having taken her aside, said to her: Euphemia, I believe if you have

I have taken notice of my conduct since I left England, my native country, you must have observed I have always been the support and refuge of the poor, and never withheld my hand from private applications; but now, I don't know by what fatal destiny, I am more in need of comfort and help than any other living creature, and having no one near me worthy to be trusted in my distress, I cast my eyes upon you, as the only one in whom I hope to find any relief or comfort, in a thing in which my honour and my life are deeply involved. Then the Duchess unfolded

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to her in a most secret manner : That since the departure of Donna Vincenzia, she could find no rest any where, and declared, that, though strange it might appear to her, she had fallen in love with a knight without ever having seen him, whose extraordinary beauty and incomparable merits had such a power over her mind, that finding herself unable to bear in secret and without hope the anguish she endured, and seeing herself destitute of every remedy, she resolved to put all her dependance on her feeling and sincerity of heart ; concluding, she was not stimulated by any impure

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attachment, neither by any hope to gratify lascivious inclinations, but merely to enjoy the sight of him, which contentment, she flattered herself, would be the only remedy to calm her distracted mind. Euphemia, who loved not less the Duchess than herself, when she heard the feeble cause of so extraordinary an inclination, pitied much her afflicted mistress; nevertheless, impatient to give her some consolation and relief, and to testify the sincere affection she had for her, she said: Madam, give some calm to your uneasiness, I beseech you: I request of you the space of

two days only, and I venture to say, I shall be able to contrive such a scheme, that in a short time you shall see him, who, without having received any offence from you, is the cause of your present suffering. The Duchess, comforted by this consoling hope, warmly recommended to Euphemia, to do her best to give a trial of her affection, with promise, if by her means her wishes should be crowned with success, the return would not only surpass her expectation, but also convince her of her gratitude.

Euphemia

Euphemia, whose head was an inexhaustible repertory of all kinds of devices, being determined to put her inventive faculty to the test ;—after having revolved in her mind several projects, none appeared more propitious to her wishes and less dangerous than the following : The delay she requested of two days being expired, she presented herself to the Duchess, to whom she said : Madam, it is impossible to conceive how my mind has been racked for these two days, and how many times I have checked remorse of conscience, to satisfy your anxiety ; however, after having well

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pondered every thing which occurred to my mind, nothing appeared to me more expedient, and more worthy of your approbation than what I am going to say, which in substance is this: That, for the execution of our enterprise, you must feign to be ill, and let yourself be brought so low, that there should be more fear of death than hope of recovery, and being reduced to this extremity, you shall make a vow, on recovering your health, to go on a fixed time to St. James, of Galicia, for which you will easily obtain leave from the Duke your husband; then you could fairly

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undertake your journey, in company with Donna Vincenzia, who will pass this way on her return from Rome, without, however, acquainting her of your affection for her brother ; and you may be sure, for the attention you paid her in your house, she will not fail to offer you her own, where you will gratify your eyes with the sight of the object of your journey : I must, besides, acquaint you of a thing, which I have kept to myself till now : I am of opinion, as it would be very difficult to accomplish our plan by ourselves only, to put, with your consent, a third person in the secret,

secret, of whom I can dispose as of myself ; in a word, it is Dr. Ridolfo, your own Physician, who, (to use no mystery,) has courted me for these two years past, with all imaginable affection, in hopes to make me his wife ; and as I have rather disregarded till now his pursuits, and have not permitted him any favour, I am certain, if I should only gratify him with some favourable looks or some kisses, he would venture a thousand lives, if it were possible, to please me : and as I know him to be a very obliging and learned man, and in great repute, he would be of very essential service in

our

our scheme, therefore I thought it necessary to apprise you of it to obtain your approbation. The Duchess was so elated by this short discourse, so proper to indulge her wishes, that she embraced her with a most tender effusion of joy, and said to her: My dear Euphemia, if you could know what gratitude waits you, and what rewards are prepared for you, I am certain, although you have given me such a great proof of your friendship, you would still improve your attachment to me. I promise you on my faith, that if our attempt be crowned with success, I

will consider you no longer as one of my attendants, but as a relation and a bosom friend, for I am so satisfied with the plan you have suggested, that if Fortune should smile on us, I don't see any obstacle to retard our putting it into execution: Employ yourself only to gain your Doctor in the manner you think best, for I consider him as the most necessary man in this plot; as to the rest, leave it to me, for no beggar has ever better counterfeited the lame, than I shall counterfeit the patient.

The

The Duchess having left Euphemia, she began a few days after to complain most pitifully, feigning now and then to feel sharp pains in her stomach and in her head, so that, after a repetition of these and other female complaints as natural as possible, she was at last persuaded to keep her bed, and so keen was she in dissembling, that a few days after, it was the opinion of every one that she was in great danger of losing her life; meanwhile Euphemia, with her amorous allurements to make sure of her Doctor, had so effectually captivated him, that, with all his great

know-

knowledge in curing the distempers of the body, he could not cure that of his mind ; and having by her charms obtained full power over him, she began to disclose by degrees the origin of the Duchess's illness, the symptoms of her passion, and the method she had observed in the course of it ; adding, in order to have still greater dominion and controul over him for the success of the scheme in which she had already engaged : If he would keep secret all this, and help them with his advice, she would in that very instant make a solemn promise to marry him, and in-

indulge him in future with all the private favours he should wish, except that which can only be requested when the marriage has been solemnized by the church; and as a token of her promise, she gave him a most engaging and affectionate kiss. The Doctor at this sudden and unexpected declaration, was rapt in such an ecstasy of joy, that he thought himself already more happy than Mars in the bosom of Venus; therefore, without hesitation, he promised her to do all that was in his power, even at the risque of his life: This affair being so happily settled, the Doctor directly began

to

to attend the Duchess, whom he found, with her pulse so agitated, her tongue so altered, and the stomach so feeble by a succession of the most terrifying convulsions, that her life was almost despaired of ; his great experience had procured him such high repute, that it was the common opinion, he was the most skilful physician of the town ; then having ordered every one to retire, he prescribed in few words to the enamoured Duchess the regimen she had to observe, and the better to conceal the secret, said he would bring her in the course of the day a light perfume,

fume, the smelling of which would throw her at times into some small syncopes, and the frequent use of it would for some time so effectually efface the bloom of her face, as to make every one believe she had escaped from the jaws of death, without doing any injury to her constitution ; and in a few days, with some other draughts, he would restore her complexion to the same lively colours she had before ; all which was very much approved by the Duchefs, and every one of them played so well his own part, that a few days after, the common report through the town was,

that

that the Duchess was in a very dangerous way.

The Duke being apprized of these afflicting circumstances, caused all the Doctors of Turin to hold a consultation, and to take into their serious consideration the critical and threatening paroxysm of the Duchess ; and the most reputed among them being assembled in the room with the Duke, some of them, after she had been perfumed according to her Doctor's direction, seeing her fainting away several times, began seriously to doubt of her recovery ; and after a

short

short conference upon the case with Doctor Ridolfo, being quite at a loss what method they should pursue, they informed the Duke, that it was necessary, at all events, she should be prepared in case the paroxysm should be fatal, for they had observed in her some symptoms, which usually precede a dissolution. The inconsolable Duke (for he was extremely fond of her) sent for the Suffragan of the Bishop of Turin, a Priest of eminent piety, to assist her in so awful a moment, to whom she made her confession in so feeble and languid a voice, as to induce a belief that she was at her last breath,

breath, and after a short preparatory exhortation, she gave him to understand that the moment of her exit was approaching, recommending her poor soul to his prayers. The Suffragan being gone, the Duke, and a few noblemen of the first rank, and some ladies walked into her room; but no sooner were they admitted, than she abandoned herself to such a delirium, as to terrify every one present, and after having been apparently seized with dreadful convulsions, she remained speechless, which dismal scene struck the attendants with fear, all believing her soul was struggling to

to quit the body ; some cried out, Madam, invoke Jesus to your assistance, others, St. Joseph ; but the alert Euphemia knowing better what Saint her mistress was to invoke, took her by the arms, and in shaking her rather roughly, cried very loudly, Madam, invoke St. James, who has so many times delivered you from past dangers. The Duchess then, as a person awakened from a sound sleep, rolling her eyes in her head, and shaking in a most strange manner all her body, began to articulate with a stammering voice : O glorious apostle St. James, in whom, from my youth,

I always

I always had a great confidence, be-
now my protector in this cruel and
dying conflict, and I make a vow,
if I should recover my health, to go
in person to honour thy holy body,
to the very place where it reposes.
Having thus ended her mock prayer,
she feigned to sleep for two or three
hours, which induced all the com-
pany to retire, except the Duke, who
could not depart from her till she
should awake; spending all this in-
terval in offering prayers to God for
the recovery of his loyal spouse.
After having so well played her part,
a few hours after feigning to have re-
covered

covered a little her senses, she began to stretch her arms and legs in such a manner, that in hearing the rustling she made, one would have been induced to think, she had been delivered from some very affecting depression, and casting a pitiful look upon the Duke, her husband, (who was holding his head down upon her pillow) she threw her right arm in a languid manner round his neck, and in embracing him, she said : Now, Sir, that I see myself somewhat out of the dreadful danger, which threatened my dissolution, permit me to embrace you, the only comfort which,

for

for these three hours I dreaded so much to lose, but thanks be given to God, and to the Saint to whom I vowed myself, I find my health so far better, that if no relapse happens, I shall prevent you from marrying a second time. The dejected Duke, on hearing these consoling words, felt a sudden joy diffuse itself in his heart, so that he was not able to utter a single word, and with his eyes melted in tears, he looked at her with an admiration, as if he had been falling into a swoon; but some one was listening at the door, who on hearing them speak, went in, and finding the

Duchess

Duchess somewhat better than expected, the agreeable news was immediately spread throughout the town ; and as she was much beloved by all the people, processions and other forms of thanksgiving, used on similar occasions, were performed through all the Dukedom on account of this happy change.

The Duchess by degrees began to find taste in her food, and her health grew every day better and better, at last she found herself as well as ever, excepting the wound she carried every where in her heart which she

re-

received by the attractive portrait of Don Alvares, made by his sister in the flower-garden. While she was daily nourishing her amorous thoughts, Donna Vincenzia arrived from Rome, and went, according to her promise, to pay a visit to the Duchess, and after many protestations of mutual friendship, the Duchess acquainted her, that since her departure from Turin, she had almost all the time been confined to her bed, afflicted with a very serious illness ; that, however, with the assistance of God, and the intercession of St. James (to whom she had vowed herself) she had recovered

covered her health ; and if she could prevail upon the Duke, her husband, she would be very happy to undertake the journey in her company. Donna Vincenzia approved very much her resolution, and neglected nothing to encourage her good intention ; painting to her in the most lively manner, the many and surprising singularities she would see in Spain ; the numerous and brilliant company of noblemen and ladies, who, at her arrival, (if she would deign to honour her house) would emulate one another in testifying their esteem and respect to so great a Princess as she was ; far

E from.

from thinking that all these encouraging invitations were unnecessary to one whom an inward spur hurried more than all these inducements. The Duchess, weary of delaying any longer, and seeing the Duke one morning in a good humour, seized the favourable opportunity, and addressed him thus : I believe, Sir, my past dangers are still fresh in your recollection, as well as the intollerable torments I suffered in my illness, and the vow I made on recovering my health ; now finding myself quite re-established and perfectly well, I am very anxious, with your permission, to

fulfil

fulfil it, and undertake this journey ; especially on having an opportunity so favourable by the return of the Spanish lady, concerning whom, not long ago, I had a conversation with you respecting her journey to Rome, who would be very happy in my company ; considering besides, I should be a perjurer if I did not fulfil it : and as I must soon or late pay this debt so incumbent on me, it is more convenient and honourable I should go with so respectable a companion, than otherwise. The affectionate Duke, granted her without hesitation the long-wished-for per-

mision, far from thinking the Duchess could entertain such a treasonable scheme of infidelity in her heart.

Proper orders were then directly given to prepare all that was requisite for such an occasion, with a chosen number of noblemen and ladies for her suite ; among whom Euphemia, and Dr. Ridolfo were not forgot ; and, being all dressed as pilgrims, they went out of the town, and having in a few days crossed the frozen Alps, and soon after arrived in the country of Roussillion, they entered the Spanish territory. The Duchess, on

finding

finding herself arrived near the place, where she expected to see the object of her long pilgrimage, requested, in a genteel manner, Donna Vincenzia and her company not to tell to any one who she was ; and advancing with short paces, talking of various and pleasing objects, which now and then presented themselves to their view, in a few hours they arrived near the country seat of Don Alvares. Donna Vincenzia requested the Duchefs to permit her to send some of her servants to acquaint her brother of their arrival ; to which the Duchefs graciously consented ; and the messenger having

luckily

luckily met him, and informed him of the arrival of his sister, and of the Duchess of Savoy, the motive of her journey, and the very friendly reception made to his sister at Turin, and above all, expatiated much upon her extraordinary beauty; Don Alvares was not so simple as not to suspect, that in attempting such a long and painful journey on foot, the Duchess had under it concealed some other more pressing motives, which perhaps the letter he had received from his sister made him surmise. But dissembling for the moment what he thought of it, he directly gave orders

orders that thirty or forty gentlemen, his vassals, should be properly equipped ; with whom (feigning to go a hunting after a hare) he took the road towards the Duchefs, and Donna Vincenzia having perceived him at a distance, said to her ; (pointing to Don Alvares) Madam, the gentleman you see prancing upon that white Spanish genet is my brother, with some of his vassals ; then Don Alvares after having for a few minutes manœuvred his horse with wonderful dexterity and grace alighted, and accosting her in a very respectful manner, said (after having kissed

her

her hand :) Madam, I am fully persuaded, that if the Knights Errand of former times, who have left an eternal memory of themselves by numberless stupendous victories, had been so happy as to meet in their adventures such pilgrims, they would very readily have abandoned the lance and the javelin, and taken the staff and the capuchin. Then the Duchess, who possessed all the graces of an high education, with a pleasing countenance, not without some little blushing at his very flattering compliment, made the following answer in his own language: Alas ! my Lord,

Lord, if the Knights you speak of had felt the happiness you say, on meeting the pilgrims you suppose, we hope in a like manner, the saint to whom we have vowed ourselves, and in consideration of whom, we have undertaken this perilous and fatiguing journey, will be in our favour; otherwise our trouble will be totally lost, and our pilgrimage ill employed.

After mutual and amorous introductions, the gallant Don Alvares taking the Duchess under his arm, conducted her as far as his castle, talking with her of such things as

suit congenial minds. The rare and wonderful beauty which shone in the happy Duchefs was so great, that he could not conceal his surprise, which neither the fatigue of a painful and long journey, nor the darts of a burning sun could so effectually alter, that her eclipsed charms should not still have a full power to captivate the most averse and frozen heart. The pleasure, however, which Don Alvares felt in admiring the Duchefs, was not to be compared with that, which her anxious eyes proved in contemplating the exceedingly beautiful face of Don Alvares, his elegant person,

son, and all the graces with which nature, improved by the advantages of cultivated talents and academical exercises, had so eminently adorned him ; and she thought within herself, all what she had heard from his sister was but a feeble picture in comparison with seeing himself in person ; persuaded that it was impossible there could exist any other equal in merits to the knight in her presence. Although her affection for him was very fervent, yet her judgment was not however led away by a transport of passion ; notwithstanding all the Historians, Latin, Spanish and

Italian,

Italian, that have spoken of Don Alvares, agree he was so wonderfully handsome, that all the princes of his time, famous for beauty, had no pretence to preference.

The disappointed Duchess, after having by her affectionate manners and pleasing countenance hinted to him the inward sentiments of her heart, without obtaining that return she expected, determined to leave the castle, and depart early in the morning without his knowledge; and as soon as the dawn of day began to appear, she went to the apartment of Donna Vincenzia, whom she most affectionately

affectionately thanked for her agreeable company, and the great courtesy received in her house; and after having taken her leave, she resumed her journey with her suite. Don Alvares having been a few hours after acquainted with her departure, took it very ill, for he was far from expecting she would quit so abruptly the castle, without even taking leave of him. But having for a little time considered what could have been her motives, he saw plainly that the fault lay on his side; and that this great princess had purposely undertaken this journey, as he thought, to pay him a visit;

visit ; reproaching himself for having been too much upon the reserve in answering her politeness, and for not having offered his services in a more pressing and affectionate manner : provoked, therefore, by his indifference, she suddenly departed, without taking any notice of him. Attributing the fault entirely to his reserved courtship, he instantly followed her on horseback, accompanied only by two pages ; and as his horse was a very swift one, he soon after perceived her on the great road leading to the shrine of Saint James ; and having alighted, he went along with her the space of about four

four miles, entreating her with the most persuasive and energetic reasons, to pardon him if he had committed any fault; beseeching her most earnestly above all to tell him, from what displeasure she had been induced to quit his house in so sudden and secret a manner; adding, if she would give him leave, he should be very happy, not only to see her as far as the sanctuary, but also to accompany her to Turin, in a manner as suitable as possible to her great rank. Then pursuing his defence, interrupted by frequent sighs: Madam, said he, fortune would have been far more favourable

vorurable to me, if, when my sister made the vow to go to Rome, I had lost the battle against my enemies ; her vow would have remained without effect, and all my misfortunes ended with the loss of a few of my subjects : but, alas ! I feel within myself, since your arrival in this country, so cruel a war, and my heart exposed to such assaults, that unable to resist them any longer, I must confess myself utterly conquered and captivated, without knowing to whom to address my complaints but to you, the only source of all my suffering ; and what grieves me stillmore, is, to observe

observe your cruel indifference, and that in order to bring me to the verge of the precipice, this morning you forsook my house, disdaining to see me ; which rigour has excited in me such distracting perplexity, that death is far preferable to the life I endure. Let me then implore your humanity to treat me with less severity, if you don't wish to have realized in me what you would be sorry to see in an enemy, which would be no less than to accelerate the period of my life in a most desperate manner. Certain it is, the griefs Don Alvares endured were not exaggerated in his

pitiful

pitiful complaints; for, in uttering them, the anguish he suffered was so expressive by the flood of tears which ran from his eyes over his languid face, that, overpowered in this conflict, he appeared to have no other chance than that of an approaching catastrophe.

The Duchess at this sight was so fully convinced of his sincere affection, that fearing lest her farther coolness might be the fatal cause of losing the precious object of all her thoughts, said to him: Don Alvares, I cannot conceive what you would have me to do,

do, neither why you should impute to me the cause of your suffering, considering if you should fall ill through me, my griefs would be such as to force me to neglect all cares to preserve any longer my miserable existence; calm then your mind, for I am entirely yours, and don't be in any concern, if, in the eyes of the public, I appear otherwise than I am; for I would rather suffer a thousand deaths, than any one of my suite should perceive a spark of the fire that devours me night and day. So great is my affection for you, that if you had only felt one

hour

hour what I endure, instead of reproaching me with cruelty, you would pity me for having been so long deprived of your sweet presence ; and without the fixed image of your person in my mind, and the firm hope of seeing you one day, it would have been impossible for me to have resisted for a length of time, the incessant and impetuous assaults which love gives to my languishing heart. I must, however, confess, the cold reception I had from you on our first interview, induced me to think it proceeded from some unfavourable opinion you had formed of me, or from having perhaps

perhaps thought me too liberal of my honour, for having abandoned the country where I command, in order to render myself the slave of your favours. These suppositions induced me to quit your house in the manner I did ; but now, persuaded as I am of my mistake by your tears and confusion, I avow my fault, and I entreat you to forget it, pledging my word, that on my return from Saint James's Church, I shall make full amends, and give you ample satisfaction on the very place where I committed the fault, by remaining your captive for some time, without

requesting my liberty, till I have made an atonement for my transgressions by an agreeable penance. You must, however, for the present be satisfied with my generous promise, and go back to your castle; lest some of my suite, more sagacious than the rest, should perceive in me what I never gave occasion to suspect. Don Alvares acquiesced in it more to please her than otherwise; for the beauty and charming graces of the Duchess were so deeply engraven in his heart, that he would have preferred never to part from her; but, alas! while they had

had so happily arranged their future enjoyment, treacherous fortune had prepared for them a fatal snare, which overthrew so effectually their contrivance, that the event turned out quite contrary to their expectations. Now we shall leave the Duchefs to perform her journey, and Don Alvares to cherish his passion, that we may return to her husband.

The Duke, about a month after the departure of the Duchefs, beginning to feel the effects of her absence, and unable to bear it by the great affection he had for her, and

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considering likewise his great imprudence (being sister of a mighty king, and wife of so great a prince) to have permitted her to go as a runaway into so distant a country, and apprehending, if any accident should happen to her, the blame would fall upon him, resolved to assemble his private council to remedy his fault. The matter being under consideration before him, the unanimous opinion of them all was, that the Duke had been too easily prevailed upon by the Duchess, and in case of any sinister event, it would be a difficult task to justify himself, adding, that the fear of displeasing

pleasing him hindered them from delivering their sentiments in due time upon the impropriety of it, thinking the most expedient way would be, that the Duke should give immediate notice of his intention to go in person by sea to fetch her back from Galicia. And every thing being in order, he set sail with a numerous suite of the first noblemen of his court ; and the wind was so much in his favour, that he arrived at Saint James's before her ; and finding she had not yet reached the sanctuary, some pilgrims informed him she was coming on at a slow pace, and

F would

would soon arrive, for they had left her and her company about three days journey from the place. At which intelligence the Duke was very well pleased, and immediately sent some of his courtiers towards her. Those that had this charge met her soon after with all her attendants; by whom she was informed of the Duke's arrival, and the cause why he left Turin. The Duchess did not relish much this news, wishing rather he should have spared his trouble; nevertheless, preferring her honour to her affection, she hastened to come to him, and made use of all the art in her

power

power to express great joy in seeing him ; pretending to feel very much for his having exposed himself to so many dangers, to afford her some consolation in her long and painful journey. Afterward they entered with great devotion into the church, where the Duchess, after having said some prayers, began to see the resistance of God to her wicked designs, and that the good Duke was protected by his providence from her unparalleled duplicity ; and entering into herself, she began to shed tears of true repentance for her premeditated wrong ; and being overpowered by remorse of

conscience, she made a firm resolution to obliterate Don Alvares and his beauty from her mind, giving at the same time thanks to God for not having, through his providential grace, permitted her attachment to have gone beyond the bounds of honour; and she made a resolution, not only to forget Don Alvares in future, but also to cut asunder this amorous connection. And having firmly determined so to do, she solicited most earnestly the Duke to conduct her back; to which, with the greatest ingenuousness, he consented; and all the equipments by sea being ready, they

set

set sail for Marseilles, and the wind being very propitious, in a few days they reached its port; when tired of the sea, orders were given for horses to carry them by land to Turin, where, for a certain space of time, they lived most happily together. Don Alvares wearied by the long delay of the Duchefs, sent a gentleman on purpose to Gallicia to know the cause of this surprising disappointment; who at his return assured him, the Duke had come in person to seek the Duchefs, and had brought her back to Turin by sea. At this unexpected and piercing news he lost all patience, and

revolving

revolving for some days in his distract-
ed mind what step to take, he made
a resolution, after having settled his
domestic affairs, to pay her a visit at
Turin.

While the things were in this pre-
dicament on both sides, the Germans,
having levied a numerous army, made
an irruption into France, pillaging
and burning all the country through
which they passed. As soon as the
King of France heard of it, he or-
dered the Duke of Savoy to march
with the French Gens-d'armes. The
Duke, on this intimation, before leav-
ing

ing the capital, chose the Count de Pancalieri for his Lieutenant General, with full power to govern the Duke-dom during his absence.

This Count de Pancalieri was a descendant of the ancient family of the Arduins, a man of intrepid courage, and great penetration in the management of publick affairs, and of such an impenetrable sagacity in promoting not only his own interest and ambitious views, but also in concealing his pride and vindictive disposition, that he had already obtained from the Duke, who was another Cæsar in

gene-

generosity, not only the government of Turin, and to be Great Master of the Artillery, but had been created besides one of the Knights of the Supreme Order of the Annunciation, instituted in those days by the Duke of Savoy, in commemoration of the glorious victory obtained by Prince Eugene, his brother, over the Ottoman forces, in taking back from them, on the day of the Annunciation of our Lady, the Isle of Rhodes, then the residence of the Grand Master of the Order, now called of Malta. The Count being, therefore, invested with full power over the Duke's

Duke's dominions, and having often occasion to confer in a familiar manner with the Duchess, seeing her so handsome, and adorned with so many graces, could not have so much command over himself as not to fall in love with her ; and this new flame acquiring every day additional strength, he forgot himself so far as to disclose it to her. But the Duchess, who was firmly determined to guard her honour, detesting all kind of lascivious discourses, advised him to be in future more reserved, and not to have the audacity to address similar language to a princess of her rank ; re-

presenting to him, how unbecoming it was in a gentleman to be so rash and presumptuous, as to utter to a great lady language of that kind, without having first perceived in her behaviour some signs of friendship ; which opinion could not be entertained of her, for, in all the course of her life she never had given any ground, neither to him nor to any other, to suspect the delicacy of her honour. The Count rather confused by this unexpected rebuke, took his leave ; but he, according to the custom of lovers, flattering himself not to be absolutely excluded on the first attempt, determined

mined to renew the attack, and with the warmest and most energetic solicitations entreated her to have pity on him ; representing to her that the vehemence of his passion was such, that without her indulgence it would put an end to his life, and her humanity alone could prevent it. The Duchefs, exceedingly provoked at this audacious language, interrupted him, and said : Count, I thought my first resentment would have silenced you, and deterred you from pursuing any more your insolent attempt. Have you, continued she, already forgot the rank to which the Duke, my

husband,

husband, has raised you ? Is this the faithful return you prepare for him ? After having constituted you supreme Lieutenant over all his dominions, you attempt now the pre-eminence over his nuptial bed. Know then, once for all, if ever you have the impudence to renew such an insulting request, I swear on the faith of a Princess, to punish you in a manner that shall serve as an example to all traitors like you.

The Count finding himself so severely treated and abused, being besides in fear lest the Duke on his return should be

be acquainted with his proceeding, turned his great love into an implacable hatred, determining whatever might happen, to contrive by all possible means the utter ruin of the offended Duchefs. And, after having revolved several plots in his mind, there came into his head, by the instigation of the devil, a most hellish one; which was, to induce a nephew of his, and the only future heir, (for he had no children) who was about twenty years of age, and one of the most handsome and accomplished noblemen of the court, to pay his addresses to the Duchefs; and being a few days after

after walking together in a remote part of his own garden, he said to this youth (who depended entirely on him:) Nephew, you well know that all the hopes you have in this world are in me only. Considering you as a son, and having no successor but you, I have made and constituted you my sole heir, on condition you should in future always keep yourself near my person, and obey me in all things I should command you, especially in those on which your welfare and aggrandisement depend. The Duke, as you know, is very old, and is now absent, and his life expos'd

every

every day to the hazards of war ; if it happen that he should die, or fall in battle, I have it in contemplation to raise you, by marrying you to some very great lady ; and were it practicable for you to obtain the Duchefs, it is impossible to conceive the advantages which will accrue to you and your posterity ; the achievement of which does not appear to me very difficult, if you will but be guided by my advice. Or at least, if you cannot succeed to the title of husband, you can, I am sure, manage that of a friend : you have a handsome presence, and are the Duchefs's favourite besides ; for I have often

ob-

observed in her words, that honour alone has been till now the troublesome obstacle to her disclosing her affection for you; dispose then of my riches as you shall think proper; spare nothing to appear splendid, and let it be henceforth your only study to please and gratify her in every thing, and time will unfold what it has till now concealed from you for want of experience.

This unfortunate young gentleman, putting all his confidence in the treasonable inventions of his uncle, (whom he considered as a father) began

to

to court the Duchess with an uncommon attention. indulging his amorous and furtive looks, or uttering words not less expressive by their modesty, than energetic by the timorous respect he entertained for her ; in a word, neglecting nothing which nature and art could suggest to ingratiate himself in her favour ; sparing no expense in all kind of diversions and splendour, to succeed in the glorious attempt. Having for some months constantly observed this method, he attracted the attention of the Duchess, she therefore thought it but reasonable in return to shew some partiality for the civilities

this

this young courtier paid her, by taking now and then some particular notice of him, not so much for the unaffected and singular beauty with which nature had favoured him, as for his distinguished affability above all other pages of her court; never suspecting he could have any dishonest view concealed under these expensive attentions; nor could she imagine the deep malice of his uncle to be the cause, whose sole happiness in this world, was to be revenged on the Duchess.

But the Count, unable to bear any longer in his heart the cruel vengeance
he

he had meditated, and impatient to put it into execution, sent for his nephew, and spoke to him thus: My dear boy, I foresee thou wilt be one of the most happy and powerful Princes in all Europe, if thou hast adroitness enough to attempt it; for the Duchess not only loves thee, but she is visibly withering away by the vehemence of the flame, which thou hast kindled in her heart; but know this: Women are ashamed, and wish to be solicited in secret, and they like a man who contrives to deceive them by surprise, in order that they may appear to have been compelled by treachery

chery to grant what they would very willingly offer, if they were not bridled by a little shame; believe me, for I have thus succeeded many times with great pleasure; therefore, trust in me, and put into execution the advice I am going to give thee, then thou thyself wilt acknowledge before to-morrow evening, how great is the affection I have for thee. I expect then, when a convenient moment shall present itself, thou wilt secretly enter into the Duchess's room, and so hide thyself under her bed that nobody shall see thee, and keep thyself there till half past one; and when

when thou shalt see the lady in waiting has fallen into a sound sleep, then thou shalt slowly come out, and approaching her, thou shalt tell her thy name ; and I am firmly of opinion, considering the burning love she has for thee, and the long absence of her husband, she will in a most affectionate manner receive thee into her arms, and indulge thee in those tender embraces, with which amorous women make their lovers completely happy.

The unwary youth falling into the snare of these deceitful allurements,

think-

thinking, perhaps, that it was a thing contrived with the Duchess, or more likely in obedience to his uncle, who was honoured as a king, acquiesced in this treacherous and abominable command; and having seized the opportunity, he concealed himself accordingly. While he was waiting the moment to put into execution the orders of his parricide uncle, who, a little before midnight, fearing his treason should come to light, took with him three counsellors and some guards of the castle, into which he could, as the Duke's Lieutenant, go in and out at all times; and without giving

ing any reason for so doing, he went suddenly to the Duchefs's room, and having knocked at the door, he said : The Duke is arrived, and asked to have the door opened ; he went in with all the company, some having lighted torches in their hands ; the Count drew his fword, and like a man furious and out of his sences, began to examine here and there, and at last under the bed of the Duchefs ; he ordered that his nephew should be dragged out, and without giving him time to pronounce a single word, lest his terrible iniquity should be discovered, he said : Perfidious adulterer,

thou

thou shalt die, and in saying so, he stabbed him with the sword through the body. Still fearing he might be able to articulate some words, he redoubled his ferocity, by piercing him through the throat with such violence, that the poor innocent nephew, after some little struggle, fell dead on the floor. When, having sheathed his sword, he turned himself towards the counsellors, and addressed them in these words : My friends, this is not the first day, that my debauched nephew has entertained a lascivious and criminal intercourse with the Duchess, and my sword has spared

him from being burnt alive, or being quartered by four horses, according to the law ; for these were the punishments which ought to have been inflicted upon him for the enormity of his crime. Concerning the Duchess, I suspend her punishment ; for, you well know the ancient law of the Great Alaric is, that a woman, of whatever rank she may be, when accused of adultery, if in the space of a year and a day she does not find a champion to espouse the defence of her innocence, ought to be burnt alive ; but, in consideration of the great favours I have received from the Duke, her husband, and the duty of the pre-

G eminent,

eminent rank to which he has raised me, to-morrow I shall dispatch a courier to inform him of what has happened; meanwhile the Duchess shall be confined under a strong guard, in the same prison* where the traitor Witri was confined for having delivered Coni to the French and Spaniards; and she shall have a lady of her choice to attend her.

The

* *This prison was a large room on the ground floor, paved with stones, having two small round windows near the ceiling with iron bars, on the north side of the castle. Against the wall run a sink, receives*

The Duchess, however, being endowed with a sound and clear judgment, directly suspected the black treason of the Count ; and casting her eyes upon the betrayed youth, and pierced with horror and grief in seeing him in his last convulsive pangs, rolling his eyes in search of death, and his pale and senseless corpse extended on the ground giving up

which receives all the filth of the different parts of the castle, which caused an intolerable stench. In this place the poor Duchess passed the year of her confinement.

his last breath, she exclaimed : O innocent soul ! which not long ago vivified this body, thou art now in a place where thou seest clearly the iniquity of thy parricide uncle. Having thus spoke with her arms across her breast, she remained almost lifeless ; then turning her eyes from the horrible scene, she requested the counsellors to inter the corpse, and restore it to the earth from which it had received its original form ; For, said she, he has not deserved to be suspended on a tree as food for ravenous birds. They granted her request, not however without suspecting her and

and the page of some intrigues, from observing she only excused the innocent page, without saying any thing to justify herself.

As soon as this flagitious transaction spread through the city, the consternation and murmurs of the people were such, as if the city had been given up to pillage ; for, the Duchess was so much beloved and esteemed by all her subjects for her virtues and affability, that every one felt her misfortune as his own.

The Count spent all the day to
prepare

prepare his dispatches ; and, having caused every circumstance to be registered in due form as it happened, ordered the counsellors and guards to sign his letters. And every thing being thus arranged, he sent with the greatest diligence two couriers, one to England to inform the King her brother, and the other to the Duke ; who being arrived at their destination, presented their dispatches, to which both the brother and the husband gave full faith ; for, by having slain his nephew, the fact was put out of all doubt ; as any one would naturally suppose, that an uncle could not be so

so divested of humanity, as to cut asunder all ties of consanguinity, by shedding the blood of a nephew, if he had not been highly criminal.

Both the Princes praised very much in themselves the great fidelity of the Count, who had not even spared his own blood to revenge the dishonour done to his sovereign; and it was resolved by the advice of their respective privy councils, as well as by the king of France, who, interesting himself in favour of the Duke, caused a great number of learned Frenchmen to give their opinion upon this most

most extraordinary cause ; and it was unanimously determined, that the ancient law should be inviolably observed in all its form, with this view, that in future the Lords and the great Ladies, who ought to shine in virtue and good example above all others, should never fully their high station by any detestable vice.

The king of England on reading the dispatches, being a man of the greatest integrity, the transient shades of suspicion which crossed his imagination could have made but very little impression upon his mind ; but

but when he came to the unparalleled sacrifice, made by the Count of his own nephew, and the only remaining heir of his title and immense fortune, the love he had for justice prepossessed him to such a degree, that forgetting it was his own sister, he gave the most implicit faith to this hellish perpetration, and sent back by the same courier a very rich sword set in diamonds to the Count, as a reward for his great act of generosity, accompanied with a letter written by his own hand, in which he declared how impartially he wished the Duchess to be proceeded

against. The courier hastened his return with such diligence, that in a few days he arrived at Turin. Not less fatal was the answer of the husband, brought back a few days after; for, although his ties of consanguinity were more deeply concerned in it, the old Duke being not less overpowered by a fit of jealousy, than by his sullied honour, wrote to the supreme Magistrates: That above all things the ancient law should be strictly executed, and who-soever should any way favour the adultery of the Duches, should be punished as a traitor. He wrote be-
fides

sides letters to the Count, in which he highly approved his fidelity, assuring him the rewards he had prepared were such as to make him forget the great sacrifice he had made in defence of his honour. Thus the innocent Duchefs was abandoned to the fury of a revengeful and cruel man by an affectionate brother, misled by too much zeal for justice, and by a tender husband, provoked by a mistaken notion of honour.

No sooner was the courier of the Duke arrived, than the matter was put under discussion before the Grand Council,

Council, who decreed, that according to the ancient law, a column of marble should be erected upon the esplanade between the stone bridge over the river Pó and the City, upon which should be affixed the accusation of the Count de Pancalieri against the Duchess of Savoy. When the unfortunate Duchess was apprised of the fatal sentence, she had only Euphemia and a few other ladies in waiting with her. I leave to the reader to conceive, for it is not in my power to suggest, the dismal and distressing lamentations to which she abandoned herself; cursing the day

she

she left her native and free land ; filling the air with imprecations against the detestable moment she gave her consent to so fatal a wedding ; tearing at the same time her beautiful hair, and the rich filken garments which she wore ; so intolerable is it for an innocent person to die ; to be cast and condemned, without any possible means to defend her cause. Seeing herself then so maliciously deprived of all human help, without the least hope to avert this ignominious and barbarous death, she threw herself on the infinite mercy of God, imploring his protection against such

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an implacable and powerful enemy.

Euphemia, however, having been informed of every circumstance of this infamous perpetration by the Duchess, and seeing the danger that awaited her mistress inevitable, with her usual sagacity, said to her: Madam, it will avail nothing to spend now your precious time in tears and complaints; I think it would be more expedient and profitable to arm yourself against your enemy, and to contrive some expedient to send Doctor Ridolfo by post to the valiant Don Alvares; who,

as

as soon as he shall be apprized of your misfortune, will so effectually remedy your case, that in restoring your honour, your life will be of course preserved; therefore, if you will believe me, you should write him a most affectionate letter, which would not be a difficult task for you, and the Doctor shall deliver it to Don Alvares, as coming from you. For my part, if you approve my advice, I know no body else, who would expose his life, under such a perilous chance as yours; and more so, if you consider the great repute and courage of the Count, who, as you know is one of

the

the most valiant and successful knights throughout all Italy, in handling a sword or a lance. The dejected Princess having heard the prudent advice of her faithful Euphemia, said : Friend, do what you think yourself most advisable, for I am so depressed and dismayed, that life or death is no more to me than if I had never been born ; for in neither of them do I see any remedy for my lost honour. Madam, replied Euphemia, leave for the present the care of your honour in the hands of God, and let us not neglect on our side, what it is in our power to do, lest we should be too

late ;

late ; having thus spoke, she presented to her a pen and ink, and a sheet of paper : I shall see now, added the humourous Euphemia, if your heart wants a prompter : The Duchefs, after having for a while recalled to her memory all that passed between her and Don Alvares, wrote him the following letter.

“ *Noble Alvares,*

“ I don’t address you in the present letter with any hope of being delivered by your hand from the pangs of a cruel death prepared for me ; having always considered it to be the only
sure

sure port and shelter for afflicted mortals like me ; but as such is the will of God, and my ill-fated star influenced it, and nature gives its consent, I go to it resigned, persuaded I shall find in the grave a strong and impenetrable rampart against all the assaults of this miserable life, which would be far preferable to seeing myself continually exposed to the caprice of fortune, and the malice of wicked men. I must, however, bring to your consideration, that, not many years ago, I abandoned the place, which was not less dear to me than that which gave me birth, where I lived

in

in a most stately and delicious afflu-
ence, to expose myself to numberless
dangers, contrary to the duty of my
exalted rank, preferring the title of a
poor pilgrim to that of a sovereign
princess, and all this from the great
friendship and affection I bore you,
even without ever having seen you be-
fore, or being induced by any preced-
ing favour. The recollection of these
things, it seems to me, ought now to
excite your feeling, and provoke your
generosity to deliver me from the hands
of the most cruel tyrant ; and prevent,
what is still worse, my being dragged
from a loathsome and dark prison to

a most

a most barbarous and ignominious death, without any hope of hereafter establishing my innocence, to the great detriment of my honour, besides leaving an irretrievable stain on my posterity. Therefore, if the saying be true, that friendship has no price, and can only be paid by a tribute of friendship, grant me a return for mine ; and if mercy is the only key to open the gates of the Celestial Mansions, use it now in behalf of an innocent Princefs, deprived of every human help, at the eve of being conducted to a burning fire, as an innocent lamb to a sacrifice ; and as the present bearer will inform you

more

more particularly of every transaction, I beseech you to give him a full faith. I shall close my mournful letter, wishing you a happy life, and myself a happy death."

After having folded it up and sealed it, the Duchess ordered Euphemia to deliver it to the doctor, charging him to forward it with all imaginable diligence night and day, till he had reached the place of Don Alvares' residence; recommending to him above all, to acquaint him with every circumstance of her innocence, and the false accusations alleged against her.

Doctor

Doctor Ridolfo, who was not less excited by the promises of Euphemia, than by the anxiety of seeing the Duchess, his mistress, out of prison, travelled with such speed, that he found himself near the Spanish frontiers considerably sooner than he imagined; and after three days journey with the same expedition, he arrived at the place where he thought to find Don Alvares; and having made some inquiry of the host where he alighted, concerning the circumstances and other particulars relating to him, he understood he had been defeated in several battles by his enemies, and reduced

duced (although still a great lord) to a very critical situation. For, added the host, for these three or four months past, the Toledans his enemies, whom he had several times defeated, rallied again from all parts of Spain, and brought such a numerous army into the field, that the chance of war has been ever since so much in their favour, that, after having totally dispersed his army, he had been compelled, with what he could rally of his scattered troops, to take shelter in a little town, the only refuge left to him, in which he was actually besieged, defending himself with such

an intrepid courage and skill, that his enemies have nearly lost all hope of rendering themselves masters of it. Afterwards the doctor asked him if the besieged town was very distant? About five posts, replied the host. Then, without making any farther inquiry, he took a guide with him, by whom he was conducted near the camp, and having perceived the town at a distance, he dismissed him.

The doctor, being near the camp, presented himself to some captains of the light-horse, from whom he bought some arms, and entered into the service of the besieging army; and

and as he was not only a man of letters, but very intelligent also in the military art, he requested to be put in front, on the first attack of the enemy, which took place, as he wished, two days after ; and having endeavoured to be made prisoner, he was conducted into the town by the soldiers of the garrison : he then requested to be brought before Don Alvares, who recollects him directly ; for he had observed on the journey of the Duchess to Spain, he was more in her confidence than any other gentleman of her suite. And after Don Alvares had heard how skilfully he entered into the town, he formed an

H high

high opinion of his capacity, and admired him very much for having exposed his life to such imminent danger to serve his mistress. Meanwhile, the doctor presented to him the Duchefs's letter. After having perused it with tears in his eyes, he retired into his room with the doctor; and, as it was a confidential one, he requested him to give him a full account of this lamentable affair; who addressed Don Alvares thus: The Duchefs, my mistress, is this moment the most afflicted of all women under the canopy of Heaven, and abandons herself to your powerful aid, most earnestly intreating you not to condemn

demn her, though she lately quitted Gallicia without fulfilling the promise she had made to you, as she be-
leeches you to attribute this fault to the importunity of the Duke, her husband, by whom, being compelled to obey, she was prevented from testifying the great regard she had for you. Then he began to unfold in the most forcible manner, how the Count Pancalieri fell in love with the Duchess, and her firmness against all his pur-
suits, and with what art he brought his nephew to conceal himself under her bed, and killed him with his own fword ; her imprisonment, and the

sentence of the atrocious death, pronounced against her.

Don Alvares in hearing this tragic recital, remained extremely surprised and concerned; nevertheless, after a short consideration, he began to form some unfavourable idea of the Duchess; being unable to conceive, how the Count could forget himself so far as to murder his own nephew and adopted son, to revenge himself on a woman. However, dissembling for the moment what he thought of it, he said: Friend, if the fatal circumstances of

my

my situation did not sufficiently speak in my defence, I could point out to you a long series of calamities, by which I have been overwhelmed ; but you see yourself to what an extremity I am now reduced, so much so, that far from being able to offer any assistance to your mistress, which grieves me exceedingly, I see nothing else but death and destruction before me ; therefore, in my great sorrow, all that I can do for the present, is to try my best to deliver you from the danger to which you have exposed yourself. Having thus finished his apology, he gave a false alarm to the enemy, to facilitate the escape of the

Doctor ;

Doctor ; which having succeeded as he wished, he was afterwards, by order of Don Alvares, conducted to a place of safety.

The Doctor seeing it was impossible for Don Alvares to quit the town, without running the risk of his life, could not blame him ; and in the hope of being still serviceable some way or other, went back to Turin with the same unrelenting diligence. Soon as he arrived, Euphemia was the first person acquainted with every thing. This warm friend, with a countenance little expected in her sex, went to the Duchess, to whom she ad-

addressed the following words ; Madam, may the grace of God give you as much firmness in your adversity as you are in need of, from the sad news brought by the Doctor, whose concern prevents him from appearing before you. Then in few words she acquainted her of the desperate situation to which Don Alvares had been reduced by his enemies, and the impossibility of obtaining any help from him.

Where is the writer that can sufficiently express the desolating griefs, in which this deserted Princess was sunk in these moments of despair ?

For,

For, after a transient calm had subsided, she, as a woman in the greatest anguish, exclaimed in these, or such like deplorable lamentations : Oh the most miserable among the most unhappy women, thou mayst now well say, the light of the day will shine no more for thee, being thus forsaken by the only one in whom thou hadst put all thy confidence ! Ah, ungrateful Alvares ! Now I well know, but too late, that the too great friendship I had for thee, has been the fatal cause of my doom, justly inflicted by Divine Justice for my wicked hypocrisy and false devotion. The faithful Euphemia seeing her distract

tracted mistress sunk in a flood of tears, and fearing some violent catastrophe should overwhelm her mental faculties, attempted to calm her as well as she could with these words : Madam, it is not becoming in a great and wise Princess, as you have always been held, to despair of yourself, knowing that all afflictions, coming from the hands of God, are in order to try our fidelity, or are a punishment for our transgressions, as you said in your complaints ; it is then incumbent upon you to arm yourself against all your enemies, and put your trust in the mercy of God, who alone can deliver you from your tribulations,

bulations, as he has done to many others when destitute of all human assistance. Alas, replied the Duchefs, it is easy for a person out of danger, to attempt consoling those in an abyss of misery ; but if you felt what I do, you could not help joining your sorrows with mine, so great is my torment, on considering that myself and my honour are to be so inhumanly destroyed in a devouring fire. I confess to you, the anguish I suffer in my mind against the assaults of death and infamy, surpasses the torments of the flames to be kindled round my body, so much so, that I could wish a sharp fword should pierce my heart at this mo-

ment, that I might be delivered from it ; leave me therefore to my cruel destiny. Euphemia, who would willingly have made a sacrifice of her life for that of the Duchess, unable to bear any longer the pangs she suffered for the fate of her mistress, retired into another room, where she began furiously to lament and scream, just as if she had been herself thrown into the flames.

While these desolating scenes were taking place in the Castle, Don Alvares, although very distant, could find no rest any where, having always in his mind the horrible disaster of the

the unfortunate Duchess he had abandoned ; and, after having well considered how shamefully he had forsaken her, and accusing himself of ingratitude for the signal proofs she had given him of her unbounded affection, said to himself : O Alvares, confess thyself unworthy to carry arms, and to be distinguished with the noble title of knight, having been decorated with it on condition thou shouldst protect the oppressed, and in particular the helpless sex, who for their defence have nothing but tears ; nevertheless thou hast, like a coward, ignominiously neglected thy duty towards a Princess, who, for the regard she had for thee,
exposed

exposed her own life, and every thing she held precious in this world. Rise then, and retrieve thy stained renown, by preferring an honourable death to an idle and pusillanimous life ; let fortune take its chance, and as the Ducheſſ did abandon her country to come to visit thee in thy prosperity ; the least, then, thou canſt do now, is to visit her in thy adverſity. Being thus inwardly excited, he determined, happen what would, to ſet off, and rescue the unfortunate Ducheſſ from the bloody hands of her tyrant ; and having fixed his resolution, he gave the neceſſary orders for the defence of the city.

Truſting

Trusting to the loyalty of the besieged ; he assembled all the captains, and gave them to understand, he had determined to look out for help, to compel the enemy to raise the siege. Afterwards he chose for his chief one of his nearest relations, in whom he had great confidence ; and on the next morning, before the break of day, went out of the town through a subterraneous passage, formerly made by the Moors, leading to some ancient ruins of a mosque, two miles distant from the place ; which discovery enabled him to make his escape, without being perceived by the enemy, encamped on the opposite side of it ; and

and being mounted on a fine Spanish
genet, he saw himself in a few hours
out of danger. And travelling by post,
night and day, he arrived at Lyons
soon after, where he provided himself
with the best arms he could find, and
with two most capital horses, one of
which was a valuable Neapolitan
race horse; and having hired some
servants, he took the road of Turin.
Being near it, he alighted at an inn
in the borough almost joining the
town, on the side called Porta Nuova
(new gate;) and having made some
inquiry of the inn-keeper, if there was
any Spaniard in the city; he answer-
ed him, He knew none but a good reli-
gious

gious friar, who, for these twenty years past, had never been out of the city; he was a virtuous man, and much beloved by all the people, and had the direction of some convents; but independent of his cell in his monastery in town, he had a little house out of the noise of the world, in a solitary place, for the comfort of his old age.

Don Alvares having been thoroughly informed of the good father's dwelling, went to him early on the following morning, and said to him in Spanish: Good father, God be with you: I am a Spaniard, come into this country concerning some business of mine; I should be under a

very

very great obligation to you, if you would but permit I should remain with you for three or four days only ; the mere lodging is all I want, for my servants shall wait upon me for every thing else. All which the good old man granted him very willingly, being much attracted by his noble and handsome presence. While a servant was gone to town, to provide the necessary things, the old man asked him from what part of Spain he was : Don Alvares very willingly satisfied him, without any disguise. Then the good friar, with tears in his eyes, said, God be thanked, for having granted me, before I quit this mortal body,

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the happiness to see in my poor abode, so great a nobleman, and of whom I am a neighbour and a vassal. Afterwards, the hospitable good man declared to him, that the loss of all his relations and fortune; determined him to quit his native land, and embrace a religious life in that solitary place, on purpose to dedicate the remainder of his days to the service of God. That he had, however, known his father and mother, and his grandfather, and beseeched him to use, with the greatest freedom, his small house as his own.

Don Alvares upon this acquainted the good friar, that he set off from Spain

Spain with the intention to see France, and spend some time in it; that passing by Lyons, he was informed of the unfortunate affair of the Duchess of Savoy, whom, if he could believe to be innocent of the crime of which she was accused, he would take upon him to rescue at the expense of his own life: nevertheless, he would by no means venture either his life or his soul to protect any guilty person. The religious man praised him much for his noble sentiments; adding, In regard to her innocence, I don't think it possible to be ascertained by any living creature, the matter resting entirely between her and

and the Count who has accused her ; but I can assure you of this, that she is held by every one in the greatest esteem and respect, for her virtue and goodness ; so much so, that a year and a half ago she undertook the painful pilgrimage to Saint James of Gallicia, and with such devotion and humility she performed it, that she was the example of all those who had seen her on that occasion. Concerning the Count Pancalieri, I must confess it would be a difficult task for one of your age to stand against him ; for, besides the great experience he has in arms, he is reputed to be one of the most strong, skilful, and dreaded

dreaded combatants of the age : nevertheless, as victory is in the hands of God, he may give it to whom he pleases, as he did with young David, against the horrible giant Goliath of Gath. To whom Don Alvares replied : Father, I have formed in my mind a scheme, by which, as you shall hear, I hope to be cleared of any remorse of conscience, whether the duel I shall compel the Count to come to, be for a just or an unjust cause ; which is this :—Under the pretence of being a father of your order, I will go to the Castle in your company, and present myself to the Duchess, and dispose her, in a suitable

able manner to confess ; and by this means acquire the truth of the fact : therefore, if you approve of it, I shall get my hair and beard shaved, and with a habit like yours, I presume the guards will easily permit us to be introduced to her ; then in a most energetic manner, I shall endeavour to persuade and dispose her to have patience, and die with resignation to the will of God ; for the term of a year and a day, if I am rightly informed, is almost expired. The good father granted him, not without some difficulty, the surprising request. However, in consideration that it might be the means of delivering the

Duchess

Duchefs from so cruel and ignominious a death, and likewise from the respect he had for his family, he offered to accompany him thither.

Having thus settled and prepared every thing, they went gravely to the Castle where the Duchefs was closely confined. Don Alvares was so much diminished in his person, and so altered in his face, not only from the affliction of having lost almost all his estates, as well as from the extreme danger in which he saw the Duchefs and himself involved ;—every thing depending on the issue of a duel with so dangerous an antagonist ;—

but

but also from the habit of a monk, with which he was clothed, that as soon as they appeared at the Castle, they were, without any difficulty admitted ; the old father having said, that the reason of their coming was, their having been induced by Christian charity to help the Duchess to prepare herself, with due resignation and composure, for the repentance of her sins, and to dispose her to receive the Holy Sacra-
ment, in order to resist the temptations of the Devil in this awful moment, and die in the grace of God. They were afterwards conducted to the Duchess's prison. The few that were with her went out directly, on the
sup-

supposition that the two fathers came by order of the Governor, to hear her last confession.

The inconsolable Duchess, being overpowered by anguish, and her body entirely exhausted, for want of rest and nourishment, was compelled to keep her bed; which circumstance answered the views of Don Alvares; for, not wishing to be known, he went to the side of the bed where the window was, and turning his back to it, the Duchess could not distinguish him in the face; the old father companion being retired into a corner, distant from the bed. Don Alvares, being close to her pillow, and having

I drawn

drawn the curtain to shut out the light, said to her in Italian, (for he could speak it as well as his own language) The peace of the Lord be with you ; to which the Duchess answered, Father, how can I have peace, being in a continual war, deprived of every comfort, and at the eve of being most cruelly and ignominiously put to death without deserving it. Then Don Alvares, who had spent the greatest part of his life in all branches of literature, replied to her : I think, Madam, you know very well that the calamities and tribulations of this world don't happen by accident or unforeseen causes, but by the providence of God,

God, by whom, even a sparrow is not forgot; as the Prophet Amos tells us—*There is no evil which comes upon the town which I have not sent.* Which truth is likewise manifested in Job, whom the devil could not afflict, if God had not first given him permission; and you must firmly believe, that tribulations are the signs of the predestined and elect, and the most sure earneſts of our future happiness; so much ſo, that if you will only conſider the divine dispensation through all the Holy Scriptures, from the beginning of the world to the present time, you will find that those whom God loves the

most, he has permitted to drink much of the cup of his passion, and to be more afflicted than others ; as when he permitted that Abel should be persecuted by Cain ; Isaac by Ishmael ; Joseph by his brothers ; David by Absalom, his own son ; the Children of Israel by Pharaoh : which things being deeply considered by Saint Paul, he said : *If we had no other hope in Jesus Christ but in this present life, we should of all men be the most miserable.* He says also, that what we suffer is little or nothing to what Jesus Christ has suffered for us : who, although he had created the whole universe, was called the son of a carpenter ;

penter ; when preaching, was calumniated ; called a glutton, a drunkard ; fond of publicans and sinners ; a Samaritan, a seducer, a demoniac, and that he cast out devils in the name of Belzebub. But let us consider, Madam, what he has suffered : we shall see him naked, to cover us ; a prisoner and bound, to free us from the bonds of the devil ; made a sacrifice, to purge us from all our sins ; we shall see him with his side opened by a spear, to shut up the gates of hell ; we shall see his hands, which have with such wonderful order made Heaven and earth, for the love he has for us ; pierced with sharp nails, and his

his head crowned with thorns, that we may be crowned with celestial and eternal glory. Let us consider, that from his sufferings, cometh our joy ; from his infirmities, our health ; and from his death, our life. Shall we not be ashamed to be found so reluctant to fight under a chief crowned with thorns ? Ah ! Madam, I entreat you, in the name of God, to prepare yourself to make an offer of your life to him, who hath not spared his own for you. Is his mighty hand weakened ? Is it not in his power to confound the rage of your enemy, and so effectually, as to prevent his ever being able to rise again ? How many have

have been seen reduced to the bitterest extremities, and abandoned of every human aid, whom, with a single glance of his merciful eyes, he has raised to far greater comfort and happiness, than they ever before enjoyed. Learn then, Madam, to console yourself with God ; and say with Saint Ignatius, as recorded in the Epistle to the Romans : *I am impatient that the fire, the beasts, and all the torments the devil can imagine, may be let loose upon my body ; for I long to enjoy my Lord and Saviour.*

After Don Alvares had finished his lively consolation, the Duchess remained so intent on the consideration of these Heavenly truths, that her soul

soul appeared quite absorbed in the enjoyment of them; for she afterwards found herself not less happy than one who has escaped a furious storm at sea. She then began to make her general confession, without omitting any thing that could aggravate her conscience; and when she came to the accusation of the Count Pancalieri, she said to the confessor: She wished that God would never pardon her any actual or mortal sin she might have committed against the Sacrament of marriage, except an unlawful affection she had for a Spanish Knight, whom, under the cloak of devotion, she went to Spain on purpose to visit; and

and she considered this sin, (although not actually committed) to have brought upon her the anger of God ; who, in consequence had permitted this false accusation to be brought against her by the Count, which she would bear with resignation to the will of God. Having thus finished her confession, she drew a rich diamond from her finger, saying : Father, although I was, not long ago, a rich Princess, as you know, I am now deprived of every thing, and this diamond, which my brother the king of England gave me when I married the Duke of Savoy, is the only thing I possess ; and as I have no other means to help you

but this, take it ; and I beseech you to remember me in your prayers, and be sure to take care of it, for it is of more value than you are aware of ; and it may happen, one day or other, to be of great service, in case your convent should be in need of assistance. The confession being ended, and the diamond accepted, the two friars took their leave of the Duchess, and went to their retirement.

While Don Alvares and the old friar were consulting together to protect the Duchess, Doctor Ridolfo, who, since his unsuccessful return from Spain, had not approached her, and but very seldom his dear Euphemia ; and being extremely concerned for the fate

fate of the Duchess, and the confinement of his future spouse, he had great reason to fear for her health ; therefore, after having solicited several times for the permission of admittance to the Duchess as her physician, he at last, with great difficulty, obtained it towards the close of the fatal period. And being beyond conception uneasy in her mind, from the idea of his not having executed his commission with Don Alvares with that zeal and fervour which the desperate case of the Duchess required, and reproaching himself as being in some measure the cause of her disaster, without maturely considering what he was about, whether wrong or right, his only view being

being to avert the horrible death she was to suffer the following day, he therefore went to the prison, and being in the presence of the Duchess, addressed her in the following manner : Madam, as many circumstances have, to my inexpressible sorrow, conspired together to deprive you of Don Alva-
res' assistance, which, perhaps, would have been more fatal to him than useful to you, nevertheless, I should be highly blameable, if, in your present situation, I should have neglected, while it was still in my power, to mitigate your future suffering ; therefore am I firmly of opinion, you will not be deficient in courage to imitate those heroines of former times, who, with much

much less reason, have shewn a firmness in their misfortunes worthy of your imitation, viz. Portia, Paolina, Lucretia, and several others: If you, Madam, will make use of your admired prudence, I have brought with me a secret, which no one possesses but myself: it is a preparation, which, on taking but a dozen drops, will throw you directly into a swoon, which will be immediately followed by a most calm and gentle death, without leaving any visible sign of what death you died. The virtuous Duchess, instead of shewing an angry disapprobation of such a deed, rather considered this desperate attempt of the Doctor in an indulgent manner, and said to

him:

him : Doctor, I see the zealous part you take in my misfortune has rather misled your prudence ; know then, that as a Christian Princess I must not imitate the Pagan heroines : I have just now, with the assistance of a holy man, prepared myself to suffer with patience and resignation the death destined for me ; and far from giving such a horrid example to my subjects, and forsaking the faith of my fore-fathers, which revolt from God would change the temporary fire into an eternal one, I beseech you to go in peace with your secret, and never to make use of it. Then turning herself to Euphemia, she said to her : My dear

dear Euphemia, I thank you most kindly for all the friendship and attention you have had for me to this moment; but as I want to spend in prayer the few hours remaining, I embrace you for the last time, and I earnestly request of you to leave me alone, and both go in peace, and pray to God for me. At these words, the inconsolable Euphemia, with a breaking heart, and melting into tears, threw herself at the Duchess's feet, exclaiming, Oh, Madam ! have pity on me; don't insist I should leave you, if you won't see me dying in your presence, for it is not in my power to quit you, as long as I can enjoy the

fight

fight of you ; and if with my miserable life I could spare yours, I would very willingly make an offer of it to your enemies. The Duchess not being able to resist so tender an affection, raised her up and acquiesced.

While this distressing scene was passing in the prison, the two friars being arrived at their solitude, Don Alvares said : Father, now I truly know this poor Princeſs to be innocent; therefore I am fully determined to defend and protect her to the last drop of my blood ; so lively is my impatience, and so incensed is my soul, that I burn with eagerness to oppose my strength to that monster's,

Pancalieri ;

Pancalieri ; therefore, I entreat you, if the chance of arms should be against me, to make known to the publick, after my death, who I am, and to the Duchess also : if, on the contrary, the victory should declare in my favour, (which cannot be but by the death of the Count) keep all this transaction secret under the seal of confession ; which the good father promised him faithfully to do. And, having spent all the day and night in prayers, at the dawn of day he mounted his best horse, completely accoutred in armour, with his head and face defended with a highly tempered helmet, and with a lance in his hand,

hand, went straight to the gate of the city, and called aloud to one of the guards, saying to him : Friend, pray go to the Count Pancalieri, and tell him to prepare himself to make good the accusation he has alleged against the Duchess of Savoy ; for a Knight is here who will compel him to disavow his calumny before he shall quit the field, and cut in two before the publick the perjured tongue, which has dared to utter such an infamous lie. As soon as this was known, it spread in a moment through all the town ; the churches were instantly crowded by a concourse of people, to implore the assistance of

Heaven

Heaven to deliver their mistress from the impending horrible execution. While the guard was delivering his message, Don Alvares galloped to the pillar where the accusation had been stuck up, waiting with impatience for the accuser.

The Count Pancalieri, far from thinking he was the next day to try his skill and strength with an undaunted champion, especially as being the last day, according to the law, he spent the whole of it in giving the proper orders how the Duchess should be conducted from the prison, along the banks of the river, to the place of execution, near the gate of the Pó. After

ter having supped alone, he went to bed ; and while asleep, the ghost of his nephew appeared to him in white, with a wound in his neck, and the blood gushing all over his garment, having a sword in his hand, pointed at the Count, threatening to take vengeance of his murderer. At this terrifying sight the Count started, and, seized with horror and amazement, sprung from the bed ; and having lighted a candle at the lamp burning in his library next to his bed room, he walked for a while up and down full of racking thoughts ; then, in hopes to alleviate his distracted mind, he put his hand upon a book ; at the

first

first opening of it (it was a bible) he beheld the print of Aman hanged to a gallows, the sight of which caused him immediately to shut it. In this dismaying and despairing perplexity, the light of the day beginning to prevail upon the remaining dusk, he rang the bell to be dressed; while dressing, he was minutely informed of the verbal challenge, just brought by the messenger. All these dreadful presages excited in him such an alarm, that he began to feel the insupportable remorse of a guilty conscience, which rent his soul with the torments of hell; and being conscious of his crime, he cursed the day he had perpetrated it.

Never-

Nevertheles, to shew he disdained to avoid the challenge, he sent to the Knight, That it was required he should write his name upon the pillar. To which Don Alvares replied, That he should not know his name; but in regard to his person, he would make him feel it before sun-set. The Count refused to fight, if he did not know beforehand the name of his antagonist. This point being taken into consideration before the council, it was pronounced by the judges, that the statutes make no mention of the name, consequently the Knight was not bound to comply; but, on the contrary, it was allowed by the same statutes, that

that the champion should have the preference in the choice of arms; and which likewise required, that the accused person should be conducted into the presence of the two combatants. The Count, aware of all this, and conscious he could not maintain the right of his request, but making a virtue of necessity, from a confidence of his long experience in this sort of fighting, armed himself with the greatest promptitude, and hastened to the appointed field of battle; where he found his enemy with black ribbons round his arms, as a mournful omen for him.

The Duchess was immediately sent for, who, far from expecting any favourable

vorurable turn to her deplorable situation, was extremely surprised on hearing there was a Knight in the field of battle armed in black, intrepid and noble in his behaviour, promising great things from his skilful and firm countenance, who insisted that the accusation of Count Pancalieri was false. The dejected Duchefs, however, not being able to imagine who this champion could be, was very perplexed ; meanwhile, being removed from her confinement, she was conducted in the following manner to the place, where the judges, the people and the two champions, were waiting for her arrival.

While

While every one was in this awful expectation, and in a most profound silence, a messenger was sent with an order to the high constable of the town, who was at the head of the doleful procession, to leave the road leading to the place of execution, and to come to the field. Soon after he had received this order, he entered the place on horseback, having a long silver staff in his hand, with a small bull of gold at the top of it, being the arms of the city of Turin; after him was carried by two men a large gonfalon, supported by two poles, twenty feet high, upon which was painted on both sides, Herodias carry-

K ing

ing a dish in her hands, with the head of Saint John Baptist in it; on the sides of it, were carried four very large square black lanterns, with tapers burning in them at the top of poles of the same height; after it were following thirty married couples of the first nobility, and in the middle of every couple a man preceding with a banner representing the pedigree of each family; afterwards followed a kettle drummer on horseback, the only one dressed in white,* with his face uncovered,

* To signify that sometimes the delinquent may have a chance to save his life.

uncovered ; all the rest were in deep mourning, with their hoods down, made of black glazed linen, which covered their head and face ; round the kettle drummer were ten musicians on foot, with clarinets in their hands, answering now and then, with the most lugubrious tone the mournful echo of the kettle drum ; directly after, were forty couple of gentlemen of the Fraternity of the Mercy, singing alternately with a most pathetic voice, the fiftieth psalm : *Have mercy upon me, O God, after thy great goodness.* Then came the unhappy Duchess in a black coach, drawn by four horses : two Divines, most eminent

nent in virtue and learning, administering to her the most salutary comfort; round the coach were eight men, four on each side, carrying a prodigiously large lighted torch, about fifteen feet high; behind the coach were four men on horseback, with lighted black tapers in their hands, intended to kindle the fire at the four corners of the pile. The poles, the banners and the torches were all hung with black crape. This funeral procession was flanked on each side by two hundred dragoons, called the Death Dragoons, in yellow and black uniform, with their carbines, and their cutlasses drawn; and the whole was closed by a company of foot

foot soldiers, with fixed bayonets. In this order the disheartening funeral advanced with slow paces into the field, where the dragoons had already made a spacious circle. On the entry of the coach, the shrill notes of the clarinets, the solemn sound of the kettle drums, and the distant tolling of the prodigious bell of the tower, had such an effect upon the fainting Duchess, that in ascending the pageant, all hung with black cloth, her emotions became so strong, that she was carried up almost lifeless. It is to you, in particular, O fair sex ! I address my words, in whose breasts compassion has made her abode : Have you ever seen

an innocent Royal Princess, with an angelic face, brought, like another Iphi-
genia, to a more excruciating death ?
Ah, Count ! Count ! thou shalt pay
dear for this. The Duchess having
been, by proper assistance, recalled a
little to her senses, the deputies for
the privileges of the field, addressed
her in the following manner—Madam,
as you are accused, of adultery by the
Count Pancalieri here present, and as
ancient custom gives you the pri-
vilege of presenting a Knight in the
space of one year and one day, who,
by strength of arms, may justify your
cause ; do you acquiesce in accepting
the champion in your presence, and
rely

rely upon him for your guilt or innocence? Then the Duchess answered, That she trusted all her rights to the mercy of God, to whom the secrets of her heart were known, and likewise to the valour of the Knight, although she presumed she had never seen him. Having so said, she fell on her knees, and turning her eyes, all in tears, towards Heaven, said: O Lord, my God! who art truth itself, to whom the anguish of my heart for this false accusation is known, expand the treasures of thy grace upon me, a poor and afflicted Princess; and as thou didst deliver Susannah from her persecutors, and Judith from the hands

of

of Holofernes, so deliver me from the hands of a tyrant, who, like a furious lion, wishes to devour my life and my honour. Having thus finished her prayer, she remained almost lifeless, and in a kind of swoon.

Then Don Alvares provoked to see the Count parading about the field, and prancing with his horse in a menacing and insolent attitude, said to him, Traitor, I am certain that the accusation thou hast brought against the Duchess has been basely invented by the blackest malice of thy heart, and I here protest and declare, before the whole world, that thou hast most perfidiously accused her, and that thou

art

art an infamous liar; and I declare moreover, that thou deservest to be sunk alive in the bottom of the sea, for the parricide thou hast so wantonly committed on the person of thy betrayed nephew, whose blood now cries for vengeance before God upon thy accursed head. Scarcely had he finished, when the Count, with an unparalleled audacity, replied: Infamous villain, who hast concealed thy name lest thy iniquity should be known, thou art grossly mistaken,—flattering thyself to free the woman who has polluted with adultery the nuptial bed of the Duke her husband; and as thou hast pushed thy insolence so far, with-

out discovering who thou art, I cannot but suppose thee to be one of her panders; therefore thou art the infamous liar, and deservest to be tied with her and burned in the same fire, or quartered by four horses, and thy scattered limbs dragged through the streets of this town, to serve as an example for ages to come, not only to debauched ladies, but also to every vile profligate like thyself.

Immediately after the Herald at Arms gave the usual signal, the two champions couching their spears, spurred their horses with such an irresistible impetuosity, and rode so closely against each other, that at their first rencontre they broke to pieces their
spears

spears against their armour, and such was the shock, that both fell down upon the ground, without however letting loose their bridles; but the intrepid courage and burning desire of Don Alvares to avenge the injured virtue of the Duchess, and the rage of the Count to be revenged on his disappointed perfidy, spurred them up again, and having thrown away the remainder of their spears, they drew their swords, when the fighting became so desperate and cruel, that the spectators were terrified to see how furiously they assailed each other, for such was their rage in aiming at each others life, that it was the general opinion so

implacable and so well supported a duel had never been seen in Piedmont, as that of these two champions; but the justice of the cause, and the merit of the victory manifesting itself on the side of the Spanish Knight, it gave him new strength in the conflict; for, whenever he appeared to be overpowered, then he raised his courage with redoubled activity, insomuch that his adversary, unable to bear any longer the incessant strokes he received, was no longer empowered to avert them, which being perceived by the Knight, who was desirous of putting an end to this long contest, he discharged upon his helmet a blow with

such

such force, that deprived the Count of his sences, who fell almost lifeles from his horse ; then Don Alvares alighting in a moment, seized the strap of his shield, and dashed him most rudely on his back, and with the hilt of his sword repeated his stroke with such vengeance, that he broke his helmet to pieces, and pressing his foot upon the Count's throat, he threatened to dispatch him with the point of his sword, faying to him in a menacing attitude : Count, the hour is at hand, when thou must go to give an account of thy hellish perfidy against the innocent Duchess. Ah, Knight ! interrupted the Count, struck with horror,

have

have pity on me, and don't precipitate my guilty soul to an eternal doom, by denying me a few minutes to repent; which request cannot be refused by a generous heart to his most inveterate enemy. Detestable wretch, replied Don Alvares, if I had any hopes of repentance in thee, I would suspend transfixing thee with this sword to the ground whereon thou liest, but being such a vile miscreant, thou wilt never be otherwise than a scourge to the innocent; nevertheless if thou wilt publicly acknowledge thy guilt, and prostrate thyself at the feet of the Duchess, and implore her pardon, I will spare thee, and leave thee to the mercy

mercy of justice; yet wert thou to experience the rigour thou so justly deservest! thou wouldest suffer the torments of those flames, thy savage malice had prepared for her. To which humiliation the Count submitted to save his life, and, kneeling before the Duchess, he made a public avowal of his wicked attempt to seduce her; and her constant aversion from his solicitations; that to take revenge of his disappointed pursuit, he induced his nephew to captivate her affections; and lastly, of having murdered him, with the intent to impress in the mind of the Duke that she had been guilty of adultery. Then turning his face

towards

towards the Duchess, he said : Madam, I must confess, it is but little to lose only one life for the expiation of the great offence I have committed against you ; therefore I most humbly entreat you, Madam, that, preferring pity and mercy to the severity of justice, you would grant me a few days to prepare myself for the fatal moment which awaits me. The goodness of the Duchess being equal to her great beauty, she said to him with a rather severe countenance : As by thy own confession, it is in my power to inflict upon thee a punishment equal to thy impious crime, nevertheless, thou shalt be for the present conducted to the

black.

black tower, and kept there in chains till the arrival of the Duke my husband, who shall dispose of thee according to his wisdom.

Who can express the joy the Duchess must have felt in her heart from this public confession, which not only delivered her from a most barbarous death, but so gloriously freed her honour and her innocence from every imputation ; independent of that inward satisfaction, which uniformly accompanies a clear and irreproachable conscience. No wonder then if we are told of her joy having been so excessively great, as to prevent her for a while articulating a single word ;

then

then raising her hands and her eyes towards heaven, she exclaimed : Oh my most bountiful Lord and Master ! be thy name for ever praised for having manifested the severity of thy Divine Justice upon the wicked man, who attempted to deprive me at once of my life and my honour, by compelling him publicly to confess his crime.

As soon as this great event had diffused itself through the immense multitude, which crowded every avenue and the adjacent places round the field, the acclamations and shouts of joy, which resounded in the air like the noise of a rapid river, when heard at a distance in the silence of the night, soon

soon reached the capital. The news immediately spread into every part of it; and the drooping hearts of the faithful subjects being revived in a moment from the firing of the cannons, and the ringing of the bells, they all abandoned their dwellings to meet their beloved Mistress, so that the beautiful Turin, from its generally deserted streets, had rather the appearance of an enchanted town than the residence of a great Prince, till her arrival, which was by far more joyful and magnificent, than when she had made her public entry.

In the mean time those that were deputed for the privilege of the field,
took

took care the Count, all mangled and unable to walk from the wounds he had received, should be carried into the tower, under a very strong guard, lest he should be torn to pieces by the people.

No sooner had Don Alvares obtained this glorious victory than he disappeared ; and after he had his few slight wounds dressed by a surgeon at the first village he arrived at, he took the road to Spain, while the Duchefs was using, but to no purpose, all possible means to find him out. The inseparable Euphemia observing her Mistress greatly disappointed, from not knowing, whom to thank for her deliverance, and

and complaining very bitterly at the departure of him to whom she owed every thing she possessed in this world, said to the Duchess: Calm your mind, Madam, perhaps he is some French knight, or more likely some English nobleman, who, suspecting the accusation of the Count to be a calumny, has taken upon himself your defence, and set off directly after to acquaint your brother of all these transactions, and his victory over the Count; and from delicate motives wishes concealment, with an intention very likely to make himself known at a more convenient opportunity. Let him be whom he will, replied the Duchess, as long as

my

my soul shall be united to this body,
I shall make him a homage of that life
which I owe to him, more than any
vassal owes his to his sovereign ; nay,
more than any son to his mother ; for
so deeply is engraven in my heart
the service he has rendered me, that I
shall carry my gratitude from the grave
to the years of eternity.

While all these surprising things
were transacting in Turin, the Duke of
Savoy, who, as we said, was Lieutenant
General of the King of France against
the Germans, was unfortunately killed
in a battle. The King of England
being apprized of this, and likewise of
the providential delivery of his sister,

he

he charged his Ambassador to insist upon a proper reparation for the high insult, and alarming danger to which his sister had been so wantonly exposed, and at the same time expressed his wishes to have her near him; he therefore immediately sent for her, with an intent to marry her again, and in the interim invest her with the full management of his household; as also, on her arrival, to gratify her with the title of first Lady of Honour to the Princess Royal, who had just entered into her seventeenth year; the marriage of whom, with the Prince of Spain, was secretly managed about that time.

The Prince of Piedmont, the only
son

son the deceased Duke had by his first wife, after having been solemnly declared Duke of Savoy, turned his first thoughts to giving an example of justice in the Count Pancalieri, and at the same time a full satisfaction to the king of England. He therefore ordered, that the sentence pronounced at his trial should be immediately put in execution, and the Count quartered by four horses. But the forgiving temper and clemency of the Duchess prevailed so much upon him, as to be satisfied with the Count's being only beheaded. Directly after, all the equipage and the retinue of the Duchess being ready, she set off for

England,

England, with the happy Ridolfo and his beloved Euphemia ; carrying away with her the heart of every citizen.

We shall now leave the Duchess in company with her brother, triumphant over her enemy, and return to Don Alvares, who being arrived near home, was directly acquainted, that, not only the enemy, who had besieged the town, had been compelled to raise their camp by the bravery of the garrison, and the steady co-operation of the inhabitants, but they had likewise succeeded in making the enemy's chief, Don Ladulphe, a prisoner of war, and that a treaty of peace was actually in very great forwardness ; nevertheless they

L had

had not ventured to come to a final conclusion without his presence. Don Alvares on hearing this agreeable and unexpected news was extremely happy, and considered it to be the fruit of having taken upon him the defence of the innocent Duchefs. Therefore on seeing his affairs had taken so favourable a turn, he acquainted the chief he had left of his arrival, and entered the town amid the rapturous joy of all his subjects ; after having perused the articles of peace agreed upon, and finding them very advantageous, he signed them directly.

Peace being so happily concluded,
and

and every thing smiling around him, without any care to disturb his peace of mind, he began to meditate under what plausible pretence he could possibly contrive to pay a visit to the Duchefs, for he was not less impatient to apprise her of all the past transactions, than he supposed her anxious to be informed of them; but his friendly star furnished one sooner than he could have expected: some reports having reached the ears of the Spanish monarch concerning the marriage of his heir apparent with the Princess Royal of England, he formed a resolution, to send, without loss of time, a splendid and numerous em-

baffy to his Britannic majesty to demand his daughter ; when Don Alvares, in consideration of his high birth and great riches, as well as being eminently endowed with many noble qualities, and possessing besides a perfect knowledge of several languages, was chosen the chief of them, with full power to conclude the marriage, in case the king of England should be inclined to it. The ambassadors, according to the orders they had received, set off with the greatest diligence for London, where the king kept his court, who, on being informed of their arrival, ordered the Princess his daughter, and the

Duchess

Duchefs to hold themselves in readiness to receive this great embassy, expected in the course of the day.

No doubt can be entertained of the Princefs and the ladies of honour wearing a profusion of the richest apparel, though more in compliment to the embassy than to set off their extraordinary beauty, as their native charms being alone sufficient to captivate, with an absolute dominion, the hearts of these noblemen. The king too, to do them a greater honour, went to meet and receive them in a very friendly manner; but no sooner were they introduced to the royal family, than the Duchess, on perceiving Don

Alvares

Alvares at a distance, conceived such an aversion from him, that, unable to conceal it, and fearing lest the confusion which was visible in her countenance should betray the agitation of her mind, she attempted to withdraw; when Don Alvares, who knew perfectly well the cause of this sudden alteration, continued paying, with the greatest politeness, every attention to her and to the ladies of her suite, dissembling his observation of her resentment; the Duchess, however, soon found an opportunity to leave the company; but the attentive Euphemia, who had followed her mistress into her apartment, suspecting the cause, asked

asked her why she retired so abruptly from so honourable a company, representing to her in a respectful and becoming manner, that from such usage, they would not form so favourable an opinion of that good sense and prudence she had uniformly shewn on every occasion. To whom the Duchess, full of indignation, replied :— How could you think, Euphemia, that I would suffer to have my hand kissed by such a cowardly traitor, unworthy of being called a knight, who had the baseness to abandon me in the most awful and trying moment of my life ; when, contrary to all the laws of honour and of my sex, I had so much degraded

degraded myself as to go as far as Spain on purpose to see him. May the Fates rather cut the thread of my life, than I should ever renew my affection for him ; but on the contrary, he shall find me a decided and implacable enemy. Euphemia, with a smile, then said to her : Truly, madam, I thought the severity of your past confinement, and the other terrifying afflictions you went through, had so entirely subdued all sensation, and depressed every passion, as to prevent your ever entertaining thoughts of revenge ; but present appearances verify my mistake ; for no sooner did you see Don Alvares, than you fled from him,

as if the grand adversary of mankind had appeared to you in his most heinous and horrible form. Euphemia, however, could not succeed in prevailing upon the Duchess to appear even at dinner, whose reluctance obliged the king to inform her, that her absence would be attended with unpleasant consequences. On receiving this message, a rosy blush, somewhat heightened by chagrin, rendered her fair complexion so beautifully charming, that the noble foreigners confessed they had never seen in any country so handsome and engaging a widow.

The tables being elegantly covered

L 5 with

with the most superb and rich services of gold and silver, and a great profusion of the most delicious and delicate dishes, which nature and art could produce, were served. When every one had taken his place at the solicitation of the King, Don Alvares and the Duchess were found near his majesty, immediately opposite each other. The perplexing situation of the Duchess, from seeing herself compelled to be gracious with her brother, and at the same time to avoid the glances of Don Alvares, was so painfully provoking, that in attempting to stifle her indignation, when by chance she turned her eyes elsewhere, they were seen darting

darting such a fire of resentment and revenge, that the watchful Euphemia endeavoured by signs, at a distance, to disapprove her mistress's countenance. Don Alvares, meanwhile, enjoyed such a pleasure in seeing all these little embarrassments, that he would not have changed his situation for a kingdom.

While the Duchess was striving to keep her eyes from Don Alvares, she could not help observing a diamond ring on his finger, and having several times glanced at it, with great amazement, recollect ed it to be the same she had given to the father confessor the day before she was to have been brought

brought to the pillar ; on which she began to revolve in her mind, how that ring could have fallen into his hands. The Duchess was now perplexed to know what steps she should take to have her curiosity gratified in this puzzling circumstance. When dinner was over, and the guests left alone, she called for Doctor Ridolfo, whom she requested to sound Don Alvares, by what means he obtained possession of the diamond he wore on his finger. This request was punctually executed by the Doctor, who, after some circuitous introductions, said, in a rather smiling manner : Don Alvares, you have there a most beauti-
ful

ful diamond, which, if I don't mistake, I think I have seen sometime ago elsewhere ; and if the liberty will not be deemed too great, I should esteem it a favour, to know by what means you became possessed of it ? To whom Don Alvares, also with a smiling countenance, replied : These, Sir, are secrets not to be communicated to every one, but be pleased to acquaint the Duchess, that no one beside herself can know them from me. Although the Duchess was not much pleased at this answer, nevertheless, being overcome by the desire of knowing the truth, she went to Don Alvares, who, aware of the force of curiosity, especially

cially in a woman, he contrived to be alone in a gallery; on her appearance, he accosted her, and, after having most affectionately kissed her hand, he began to relate past events; representing to her how much he repented of not having complied with the request of her letter, which he received from Dr. Ridolfo, and that some time after, he undertook the journey to Turin, and by what means and why he had heard her confession, which was the cause of his having the diamond in his possession; recalling to her memory, word by word, all he said to her in the frock of a Franciscan friar, asserting the victory he obtained over

over the Count Pancalieri, his sudden disappearance, and concluded his narrative by repeating every circumstance, which could persuade her of his sincere affection and esteem.

To even sketch a lively picture of this interesting scene, it would be necessary to have a pen out of Cupid's wings, dipt in the ink of Sappho ; for the Duchess was so extremely affected on hearing these wonderful effects of his sincere affection, particularly the sacrifice he had offered of his life for the preservation of her's, that, from the emotions of her heart, she was unable to express her gratitude, but instantly fell senseless into his arms, and

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with her lovely mouth close to that of Don Alvares, her silence expressed far more energetically than words could describe, how much she wished her heart to be united with that of her noble and magnanimous deliverer; when a little after, just as if she had awakened from a trance, she began to exclaim : Oh my poor heart ! so long tormented, and for this year past so furiously tossed about by an uninterrupted storm of afflictions and dangers, now thou possest the only remedy to expel them all, by holding in thy arms the man who has ventured his own life, and made a sacrifice of every thing dear, to rescue thee from the jaws.

jaws of a cruel death. Let fortune raise in future whatever enemy she can against me, I shall always consider myself eternally bound in gratitude, for the favour she has this day imparted to me.

The noble Don Alvares interrupted the Duchess with the following words: I entreat you, Madam, let us not recall to our memory the dangers which are past; and if I have in any degree averted them, I have been but the instrument: for God, in his infinite justice, never permits an injustice to pass unpunished sooner or late; therefore as you were innocent and unjustly accused, if I had not come forward in
your

your defence, as I was bound to do, some other would have risen to execute what I did. Well, my Lord, said the Duchess, as you disapprove a repetition of those griefs your valiant arm has dissipated, permit me to ask your pardon, if to-day I have not paid you that respect which your merits so highly deserve; submitting myself, before you quit this country, to whatever should be expected by your generosity as an atonement for it. Madam, replied the gallant Knight, all the wrongs you have done to me, (if civilities and favours conferred upon me to the present moment are to be denominated wrongs,) can be atoned with,

with a single word, by consenting to honour me with the title of husband —it having been the will of God to call the Duke to a future life—which would be the very apex of happiness I could possibly aspire to in this world. My dear Don Alvares, replied the grateful Duchess, the return is small if the reward you deserve be considered ; but I can assure you of this, if I possessed the absolute dominion of the world, and if I were the most accomplished Princess in virtue and graces now living, I would, with equal promptitude, submit myself to you, in consideration of your merits, and for what you have done for me. Fortune, I must

must confess, has been very kind to me, in having placed me under your power, to which I shall be submissive so long as my soul shall dwell in this body, which was born as I firmly believe, to serve and obey you.

While they were thus expressing their mutual affection, Euphemia came in to announce to them, the King's being in council with the other Spanish noblemen, and waited for them ; Don Alvares being in his presence, and having most respectfully bowed to him and to all the company, began to unfold the motive of his embassy, and of having been sent on purpose to his Majesty, by the king of Spain his sovereign.

vereign, to demand the Princess Royal, his daughter, for his sovereign's son, the hereditary prince of Spain, whom he had chosen, not only for the alliance, which he was very anxious to contract, but likewise for her great beauty and exalted merits; being persuaded that his Majesty would be sensible of the sincere friendship of his sovereign in preferring an alliance with him to that of all other Princes of Europe. To whom the King answered: Friends, I esteem so much the preference of being allied with the king of Spain, that if his Majesty had not been first in making the proposal, I had it in contemplation to send an embassy to

Spain to the same effect ; and altho' he has on the present occasion surpassed me in politeness and courtesy, I will do my utmost, if not to surpass, at least to equal him in friendship ; for I am so sensible, continued he, of the obligation he has conferred, that his Majesty and the Prince his son, as long as I reign, shall have the king of England and his kingdom at their disposal.

The marriage being thus happily agreed upon ; the Duchess waited for an opportunity of finding the king alone, to communicate to him what had passed between her and Don Alvares, and when he was going into his apartment, she followed him ; being thus

thus alone, she, with tears in her eyes, threw herself at his feet, and said to him: Sir, when the afflictions and cruel vicissitudes of fortune I have experienced present themselves to my mind, especially my having been reduced to the mercy of a jailer, in a gloomy prison, and what is still more dreadful, to the near approach of an ignominious and barbarous death, I feel myself so discomposed, that the mere recollection of these miseries makes me shudder, so great is the agitation which pervades my senses in these moments: and on the other side, when I consider the protection of the Almighty in having not only delivered

me with his All-powerful hand from such a horrible death, but also in having caused me to triumph over my enemy, I feel such consolation in my soul, that all the pleasures and enjoyments of this world are, comparatively, but a delusion.

But these divine blessings are not beheld without a cloud, from my having neglected to make a becoming return of gratitude to my generous deliverer: nevertheless, with a single word, Sir, it is in your power to discharge this important debt, and give tranquillity to my mind.

The king, who loved not less his
sister

fister than his daughter, observing her beautiful face covered with tears, and her countenance full of affection, raised her up, and holding her in his arms, said to her : My dear fister, if your deliverer has not yet received any reward from my generosity, to which he is so eminently intitled, it is only to be attributed to his concealment, as you told me, and not to my ingratitude ; for I protest to you, and I swear it upon my scepter, that as soon as I shall know who is the hero to whom you and I are so much indebted, he shall find in me a great and generous monarch, even half my kingdom will not be deemed more

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than a sufficient remuneration, from the consideration of his having saved your life at the risk of his own, as well as from his having fought for my honour, so inseparably connected with yours. Alas ! Sir, replied she, our benefactor is the valiant Don Alvares, the chief of this embassy ; if it please you to give your consent, the priest shall unite our hands, our hearts are already inseparable, when every obligation will be discharged, and thereby you will change our present state of anxiety and fear, into that which alone can render our lives extremely happy. Then she began to explain to the king, the journey of Donna

Vincenzia

Vincenzia into Piedmont, her own to Saint James of Gallicia, the honest friendship between her and Don Alvares, the message of Dr. Ridolfo to him, his refusal, his journey to Turin, her confession to him, the discovery of the diamond, in a word, all that had passed between them, except the real motive of her feigned devotion to Saint James, which her honour forbade her to disclose. The king was so affected with joy and surprise at the recital of these wonderful events, that he was not able for a while to utter a single word. Having briefly considered the whole matter, he said to his sister: Are you sure that

Don Alvares wishes to have you for his spouse? Yes, Sir, said she, I am sure, for he has made the request to me in the most pressing manner. Well, then, replied the king: God forbid I should oppose an union formed by supreme destiny: if Don Alvares were not of such high rank, but even of inferior extraction, and less opulent, yet his having atchieved so much for you, and for me, it would then be an injustice to refuse: how much more unjust would it now be, considering his high birth, and his being so eminently noble and powerful in riches and dominions, to deny him our alliance; and particularly when we ad-

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vert to the exposure of his life, at the most critical juncture of his own affairs, to save yours? Go, my dear, go, to love and careſs him as you wish, and after I have dispaſhed ſome little buſineſs, I will then go and ſpeak more fully upon our affairs.

Scarcely had the Duchess time to acquaint Don Alvares of what had been ſettled between her and the king, when he entered into the grand faſloon, where Don Alvares and the Spanish noblemen were aſſembled, and with a very pleaſing countenance preſented himſelf to Don Alvares, to whom he ſaid: My lord, pray embrace me, for, as far as I can fee, I am

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more indebted to you than I thought of. On Don Alvares attempting to embrace his knees, he was immediately raised up by the king, who, after having embraced him most affectionately, thus addressed him in a very audible voice before all the company. Noble Alvares, I am happy in being constrained to acknowledge, that never since I possessed the command over the kingdom of England, did a fairer occasion present itself for esteeming and loving any prince for obligations conferred, than this moment; especially when I reflect, that the services you have rendered me, are far beyond my ability to reward ;

ward ; however, I shall not rest till I have given some testimonies of my gratitude. The king then repeated to the company the whole story of Don Alvares and the Duchefs, in the same manner he had heard it from his sister, at which every one was struck with admiration, not merely from the prudence and gallantry displayed by Don Alvares, but from his having conducted the affair to so happy and glorious a conclusion, and in such a masterly and secret manner.

The king being anxious to celebrate this double feast with pomp and solemnity, gave orders for its being made public throughout the kingdom ;

dom ; when all the grandees and nobility of the land were present ; and in order to honour Don Alvares the more, the king made him Lord High Steward of the whole kingdom, with full power in all the most important affairs of the state.

The ceremonies of the marriage being thus concluded with the Dukes ; Don Alvares went back to Spain to conduct the Prince, and as soon as he arrived, his marriage with the Princess Royal was solemnized with all the magnificence and splendour becoming a great Monarch.

FINIS.

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